Acculturation and Its Role

Acculturation and Enculturation Processes

From the moment we are born, we immediately are enculturated into "our" way of viewing and interacting with the world. *Enculturation* refers to our *initial* socialization to the norms of our culture or group. This is the process by which we as children acquire the foundational values, behaviors, and language appropriate for the contexts in which we will physically, cognitively, and socially develop. It is evident across different cultures that the way we use language to meet our needs, the way we position ourselves in relation to the world, and the way we come to learn information is intimately tied to our primary caregivers, our community, and our culture. Often culture is not limited to our place of origin. Rather, our culture is multifaceted, comprising many complex and dynamic dimensions of who we are and how we define ourselves within any situation.

On the other hand, *acculturation* is "a natural process of adaptation to a new cultural and social environment" (Collier, 2016 p. 4). In this case, a person who is already socialized to a particular set of norms comes into contact with others of another culture, whose norms or ways may be markedly different. When the learner, as self, comes to school, this person begins the process of transforming, acculturating, and fitting in within a new space and place. This acculturation process can be complex, painful, and humiliating, and it may lead learners to develop a cognitive belief system that reflects the belief that they have no knowledge worth sharing. Therefore, what we as educators do to bridge the learner to new norms during the acculturation process is critical to teaching and learning.

Important questions for educators to consider include:

- Why must classroom teachers and other educators understand the values and beliefs to which they themselves have been enculturated?
- How can these values and beliefs influence educators' responses to, and relationships with, their students?
- What conditions must be present to provide the learner support systems during the acculturation process?
- What may be signs of acculturation stress?

- How can the family be involved to support the process of bridging from the home to the school?

The Teacher's Enculturation and Cultural Lens

The process of enculturation leaves individuals with a sort of filter or lens through which they interpret the behaviors and interactions of others. We become accustomed to our own patterns of response because they generally work effectively with people who have been socialized in the same, or a very similar, culture. However, when we try to read situations and behaviors that result from different cultural norms and experiences, inaccurate assumptions and misunderstandings often follow. This is true for both teachers and students.

Teachers' reflection on their own enculturation can be an eye-opening experience. Teachers who are able to identify their own cultural lens (or way of viewing the world) are generally much better able to recognize how that lens colors or distorts their perceptions of other people and events. The culturally reflective teacher also understands that CLD students have often been thrust into an environment in which their own lens are suddenly an unreliable guide for social interaction. This can lead to confusing (and inadvertently punishing) situations in which previously appropriate behaviors garner unpredictably negative reactions. In the following scenario, Fadi's experience is a prime example of these compounding misperceptions:

> **Fadi is a very bright Palestinian student. He seems to be doing well with sheltered instruction in Mr. Tennyson's class, but he is frequently involved in playground conflicts. Although it's not unusual for 4th-graders to prefer same-sex playmates, Fadi's constant touching of the other boys has led to many problems, given the policies of the school. Fadi disregards the looks and body language warning him to stop but becomes overly upset and cries when his actions result in name-calling, hitting, and alienation from those he considers his friends and reprimands from teachers. For Fadi, school has become an unpleasant place. His increasing visits to the nurse and number of days home sick only add to the Mr. Tennyson's concerns that Fadi will not be successful academically and will never fit in with his peers.**

In this scenario, Fadi has failed in becoming part of the community of learners. Lack of understanding surrounds the reality that Fadi's sociocultural norms are clashing with the norms of many of his peers and those of the school. His teacher, Mr. Tennyson, has failed to understand the cultural norms for play that Fadi learned from his immediate enculturation. Fadi is, in fact, just behaving as expected of a boy with his background. He has been socialized in a culture that does not stigmatize males for platonic physical contact. Touching is common during play as a way to communicate friendship. Mr. Tennyson's view of expected behaviors for Fadi to include keeping his hands to himself while students line up during transition time in school and during play are in complete conflict with how Fadi has been socialized to behave in and out of school. He has been used to holding hands or draping his arms around peers as he transitions between activities and classes. Touching during play is just what boys in his culture do.

In this situation, Fadi and the other boys perceived and responded to one another's behaviors according to their own socialization or frameworks of thinking. Mr. Tennyson's interpretation, similar to that of the boys, was enhanced by professional training about the potential negative significance of Fadi's actions. Unfortunately, these ways of thinking led to a web of assumptions and reactions that initially interfered with appropriate resolution of the conflict. Therefore, as students acculturate to new school norms, it is important to check the assumptions we as educators hold in relation to what we perceive regarding behaviors that may not meet the norms of the new classroom and school.

Teaching Tips:

- Learn about the country of origin for new students.
- Investigate how a behavior in question is perceived and addressed within the primary culture of the learner.
- Have conversations with the family and the student to discuss the "why" of the observed behaviors.

Acculturation Dynamics

The relationship between enculturation and acculturation is fascinating but not always easy to understand for those who have not experienced it firsthand. Imagine the frustration you would feel if suddenly the function keys on the familiar television remote were randomly reassigned. Now, pressing any of the automatically understood keys (those to which you are enculturated to use) results in a completely undesired response. How might you feel and react?

Students often get so many mixed messages from media, social media, their parents, and their peers that often the acculturation process becomes a psychological crisis, as they struggle to know when to behave how and for whom. Often immigrants are told, "You are in the United States now. You must speak only English and act like an American." Educators that do not recognize the psychological trauma that students and families experience often have difficulty understanding the student actions and responses that they witness at school. It is important to keep in mind that acculturation does not necessarily occur at the same rate or to the same degree among individuals, even among members of the same immigrant group or family. Most models of acculturation recognize that students often go through a variety of phases characterized by the following:

1. *Euphoria*. There is a curiosity and enthusiasm about the host culture.
2. *Culture shock*. Novelty gives way to reality. Irritability, anger, grief, and sometimes depression ensue.
3. *Anomie*. Individuals begin to understand and sort out their role in each culture. Frequently, however, individuals feel they are in a cultural "no man's land," estranged from the home culture but not yet accepted into the mainstream of the host culture. This period can be short-lived or persist throughout an individual's lifetime. Anomie is often associated with negative overall socialization. By contrast, the ability to adapt to the norms of the new culture while retaining affiliation with the old correlates with much more positive acculturation.
4. *Adoption/Adaptation*. Individuals may fully adopt the new culture as a replacement for the primary culture (assimilation) or adapt to it in a manner that allow them to function authentically within both (integration).

Assessment Freeze Frame 4.1

> Acculturation does not necessarily occur at the same rate or to the same degree among

> individuals, even among members of the same immigrant group or family.

Acculturation can affect people in many different ways. The types and degrees of difference between cultures are also factors in acculturation. As the degree of difference between the cultures increases, so does the likelihood that the norms of one will violate the norms of the other—and that the process of acculturation will also be accompanied by culture shock.

Culture shock commonly occurs as the novelty of the unfamiliar evolves into a frustrating reality for which there is no quick or easy remedy. In addition to sudden changes in language, recently immigrated students are often dealing with issues of loss associated with the friends, family, and community they left behind. Depending on the reasons for immigration, there may be increased family tensions and insecurities. Language barriers, social isolation, finances, and work schedules can leave some parents less able to provide the emotional support their children need during this critically stressful time. For students who are not recent immigrants, but whose culture is different from that of the school, it may take time to get into the rhythm and routine of the classroom and school setting.

Students who experience culture shock may demonstrate anger, irritability, disorderly behavior, signs of depression, emotionality (e.g., crying), increased somatic complaints (e.g., headache, upset stomach), homesickness, excessive sleeping, overeating or loss of appetite, social withdrawal, or loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities. These symptoms are significant areas of concern for educators because they not only impair a student's ability to learn but also are serious indicators of psychological and physical distress. Because students experiencing acculturation "may behave in a manner that is similar to students with a learning or behavior disability or other inhibiting factor" (Collier, 2016, p. 4), and because erroneous placements only compound the problems, it is essential for teachers to understand and be able to assess as much as possible their students' levels of acculturation. An understanding of the multiple factors contributing to a student's behavior enables teachers and other educators to make informed decisions about appropriate programming, instruction, and assessment.

Like students who struggle with other forms of trauma, learners experiencing dysregulated states (i.e., responding negatively or emotionally out of fear or stress) because of acculturation challenges need caring adults who can provide a calming, safe, and stabilizing influence. Efforts to reason, restate consequences, or enforce control will do little to move learning forward if, in that moment, what the student really needs is acceptance, connection, and relationship (Sporleder & Forbes

what the student really needs is acceptance, connection, and relationship (Sporleder & Forbes, 2016). When students are functioning in a fight or flight survival mode, it is "physiologically impossible for them to function appropriately and constructively in the classroom or on the playground" (Sporleder & Forbes, 2016, p. 27). With this in mind, learning will get back on track most quickly if teachers first listen to the child and respond to needs of the heart (emotions) before trying to connect with the intellect.

Regardless of whether a student experiences culture shock, there are psychological, linguistic, and cultural changes related to the acculturation processes. Depending on individuals and their context, acculturation can result in assimilation, integration, rejection, or deculturation. It is extremely helpful for teachers to understand what each means for CLD students in their classroom.

Assimilation

Assimilation occurs when students replace their native cultural patterns and language with those of the new (or host) community. Among overt indicators are style of dress, customs, religious practices, and espoused beliefs. Assimilation represents a sacrifice rather than integration of or adaptation to new cultural and linguistic norms. Not all students want to look and act like everyone else, yet the need to feel accepted often forces CLD students to replace their previous ways with those of their host culture peers. Rapid assimilation to a new culture or language may result in a disconnection between CLD students and parents or family members that undermines family cohesiveness and strength (e.g., the ability to guide, support, solve problems, and communicate values).

Teaching Tips:

- Regularly remind students of the value of their languages and cultures.
- Share with the class the cultures and languages of CLD students. Encourage students to discuss relevant connections during daily lessons.
- Allow students' use of the native language during instruction.
- Create opportunities for students to highlight their unique backgrounds whenever possible.

Integration

Integration or adaptation reflects the degree to which the CLD student is capable of and comfortable participating in the norms and customary routines of different groups. Some indications of integration include situationally appropriate language, style of dress, and food preferences, but other signs are more subtle. It is important to note that behavioral acculturation (e.g., language, social skills, customs) and psychological acculturation (e.g., values, belief systems, attitudes) often do not occur in a parallel manner. Therefore, it may not be appropriate to infer acculturation levels based on single indicators, such as language or style of dress.

Teaching Tips:

- During instruction, group students in configurations that provide the learner the opportunity to interact socially and academically with students from the different cultures.
- Share out, when appropriate, the similarities and differences between the new culture and the culture of the learner.
- Celebrate the foods, languages, and traditions of the learners in your classroom on a daily basis.
- Select strategies and use techniques that provide ongoing opportunities to use the cultural assets the student brings to the community of the classroom.

Rejection

Attending to the culture of the learner during instruction sends the message that the learner is important and bolsters the psychological dimension of the acculturation process. Not attending to culture in the classroom can push students toward rejecting the new culture. Rejection reflects the conscious choice an individual makes to shun either the host or the home culture. Rejection of the new culture is sometimes prevalent among immigrants who choose to isolate themselves from nearly everything about the new culture.

On the other hand, individuals may come to believe that customs and behaviors associated with the old culture are undesirable or a threat to their security. Unfortunately, there is little evidence that directing such negative emotions toward one's own group eases conflicts of the acculturation process. Instead, remaining connected to core cultural values can serve as a source of resilience for students and as a protective factor against substance abuse and other risky behaviors (Sue &

Sue, 2015).

The goal of any classroom is to create a space and ecology of trust through the activities the teacher selects and the ways in which instructional conversations support the building of community throughout the lesson. The goal is an ecology where the individual members of the learning community come to understand each other in relation to who they are and how they learn.

Teaching Tips:

- Select academic activities that allow learners to share who they are and how they bring meaning to the text or learning.
- Provide opportunities for talk where there are no right or wrong answers, and where there are opportunities to share experiences and knowledge from home, the country of origin, or previous schooling.
- Enter into conversations with your students that remind them of the contributions their parents make through their work in the community.
- Through whole-class instructional conversations, make public for the community of learners what is similar and different about each member's socialization, highlighting the diverse strengths of individuals and of the group.

Deculturation

Deculturation describes the cultural anomie or "no man's land" that some immigrants experience as a result of the disconnection from the home culture and language that occurred before, or in absence of, positive acculturation to the new community, culture, and language. According to Durkheim (1951), who first described the term in depth, anomie occurs when cultural norms break down as a result of rapid change. When CLD students' ties to their primary culture are weakened or broken due to factors such as language loss or societal negativity, the social norms of that home and culture may no longer influence their behavior. Unless positively integrated into the host culture, deculturated individuals may experience dissatisfaction and conflict for years as they struggle to find their place in society.

Teaching Tips:

Teaching Tips:

- Attending to the diversity in the classroom through activities that highlight the uniqueness of every student and family may encourage the student to keep connected to the home culture and language.
- Through instructional conversations, highlight the assets of every student.
- Connect the content of the curriculum to the student's background whenever possible.
- Affirm student contributions, especially those that are linked to the home culture and language.

Accommodative Assessment Practices 4.1

As Ms. Wessels prepared notice letters for the year's first conferences, she recalled that Enrique's enrollment listed Spanish as the home language. To verify this, she asked, "Your parents speak Spanish, right?" "No," Enrique said, with noticeable irritation. "We speak only English." Because the enrollment form could certainly be in error, Ms. Wessels asked the school's bilingual aide to be on the extension as she called home to make arrangements for the conference.

"*Bueno?*" on the other end of the line cued the aide to ask Enrique's mom her preferred language. She replied that, although she was trying to learn English, she would not be able to communicate well without an interpreter. When Ms. Wessels shared her confusion about Enrique's comments, there was a long sigh. "Yes," said his mother. "He tells me to only speak English, but I can't. Then he says he wants hot dogs and macaroni and cheese . . . no more *taquitos.* That upsets us and we don't know what to do." Ms. Wessels agreed that these were important issues they would follow up on during their conference.

By the time she hung up the phone, Ms. Wessels decided to add a new word to this week's vocabulary list. As the class reviewed the list of words later that day, nearly all the students knew each word until they got to *facile.* Enrique looked up but remained silent. The others shook their heads or frowned when Ms. Wessels asked if anyone had ever heard that word before. Then she put the word in a sentence: *Basketball is a facile sport for Michael.* "What do you think that

put the word in a sentence: Basketball is a facile sport for Brendan." What do you think that means?" Among the shrugs and puzzled faces, Ms. Wessels saw Enrique's hand. He blurted, "That means it's easy for him. Basketball is easy for him."

"Wow!" she exclaimed. "You're right! How did you know what *facile* means?"

Without hesitation, he answered, "Because I know *fácil,* and that means "easy" in Spanish."

"So you have two languages' worth of vocabulary words?"

"Yes," he smiled.

To the class, she asked, "How many of you would like to learn some of the extra vocabulary words Enrique knows?" Of course, hands flew in the air, and Ms. Wessels had the perfect opportunity to begin her "Double Value" word wall, which Enrique assisted with every week thereafter.

Students who go through deculturation are the most difficult to support. Often, they are resistant to offering insights about their culture and language and would rather go unnoticed. A fine line exists for the teacher who wants to support students in being proud of who they are and where they come from and not further alienating them in the classroom. The best course of action in this case is to build a relationship of trust and hold one-on-one conversations with the students about their background.

The process of acculturation is unique to each individual student. Many factors, including those related to the home, school, and larger society, influence a student's ability to adapt positively to the new culture. Although educators cannot control the myriad complexities of a student's acculturation process, they *can* work to ensure that the school environment both values students from diverse cultural and language backgrounds and encourages their successful integration. For example, school gatekeeping staff (e.g., secretaries, administrative assistants, office aides, administrative specialists, school–community liaisons, social workers) can significantly contribute to the acculturation difficulties CLD students and families face at school. Without recurrent professional development in cross-cultural and cross-linguistic sensitivity, these staff members are often unaware of the influences they have on family perspectives about the school, its mission, and

its faculty members. Accordingly, successful classroom teachers of CLD students are persistent advocates for appropriate and progressive professional development for school staff, faculty members, and administrators. Table 4.1 details ways a school environment either encourages or discourages each form of cultural adjustment.

Table 4.1

Acculturation Environments

Acculturation Experience	School Factors That Contribute to This Experience	School Factors That Limit This Experience
Assimilation	• Requires that only English be spoken • Mandates strict adherence to a single school uniform • Celebrates only Christian holidays • Forbids prayer • Allows only specific types of responses during classroom instruction and activities • Maintains and promotes only Western views on issues (e.g., medicine, the meaning of life, legitimate sources of knowledge)	• Supports and incorporates use of the native language • Allows for variation within the school dress code • Encourages students to learn about and celebrate the holidays of multiple cultures • Allows private prayer (appropriate to the religion of the student) • Encourages multiple forms of response during classroom instruction and activities • Views open-

		mindedness as an asset to the construction of knowledge
Integration	• Investigates discrepancies between student behavior and expected behavior to determine the crux of the matter as well as the most appropriate course of action • Recognizes the value of communication in the native language, even if the speakers are able to communicate in English • Encourages students to see themselves as capable of understanding, appreciating, and working from multiple perspectives	• Punishes all deviances from behavior that is expected in academic situations • Expects CLD students to speak only in English, especially if monolingual-English speakers are present • Encourages the perspective that there is only one right way to think, speak, and behave
Rejection	• Allows discrimination based on language, religion, or culture to persist • Encourages students to view differences in customs, behaviors, and so forth, as either good or	• Prohibits all forms of discrimination and promotes a climate that embraces difference • Views differences in customs, behaviors, and so forth, as

Relationship Between Cultural Identity and Acculturation

How well CLD students acculturate—and the attitudes about self and others that are formed during this process—can profoundly affect the students, their families, and their communities. Recent studies on the relationship between cultural identity and student wellness (and achievement) have yielded the following findings:

- Ethnic identity is the strongest predictor of overall wellness for CLD students (Dixon Rayle & Myers, 2004; Molix & Bettencourt, 2010).
- Higher levels of positive socioemotional development are consistent with students' positive identification with both their own and the majority group's culture (Chen, Benet-Martínez, & Bond, 2008; Shrake & Rhee, 2004).
- Disengagement with one's own ethnic identity, characterized by negative attitudes toward one's own group, can result in psychological distress, including feelings of marginality, low self-esteem, and depression (Jensen, Arnett, & McKenzie, 2011; Sabatier, 2008).

Ethnic or cultural identities are particularly significant components of a CLD student's self-identity. Research suggests that CLD students who have a positive association and affiliation with their own cultural group are less likely to experience internal or external conflicts in their own identity development and are more likely to develop positive relations with members of other groups (Sabatier, 2008; Shrake & Rhee, 2004; Umaña-Taylor, 2011). Students with a strong sense of ethnic or cultural identity also rate higher on measures of emotional wellness that correlate with higher student achievement (Caldwell & Siwatu, 2003; Dixon Rayle & Myers, 2004). In essence, students who are able to maintain a positive ethnic identity throughout the acculturation process demonstrate:

- Better overall mental health (Dixon Rayle & Myers, 2004; Umaña-Taylor, 2011)
- Fewer somatic symptoms (Rogers-Sirin, Ryce, & Sirin, 2014; Wright & Littleford, 2002)
- Improved academic achievement (Caldwell & Siwatu, 2003; Umaña-Taylor, Wong, Gonzales, & Dumka, 2012)

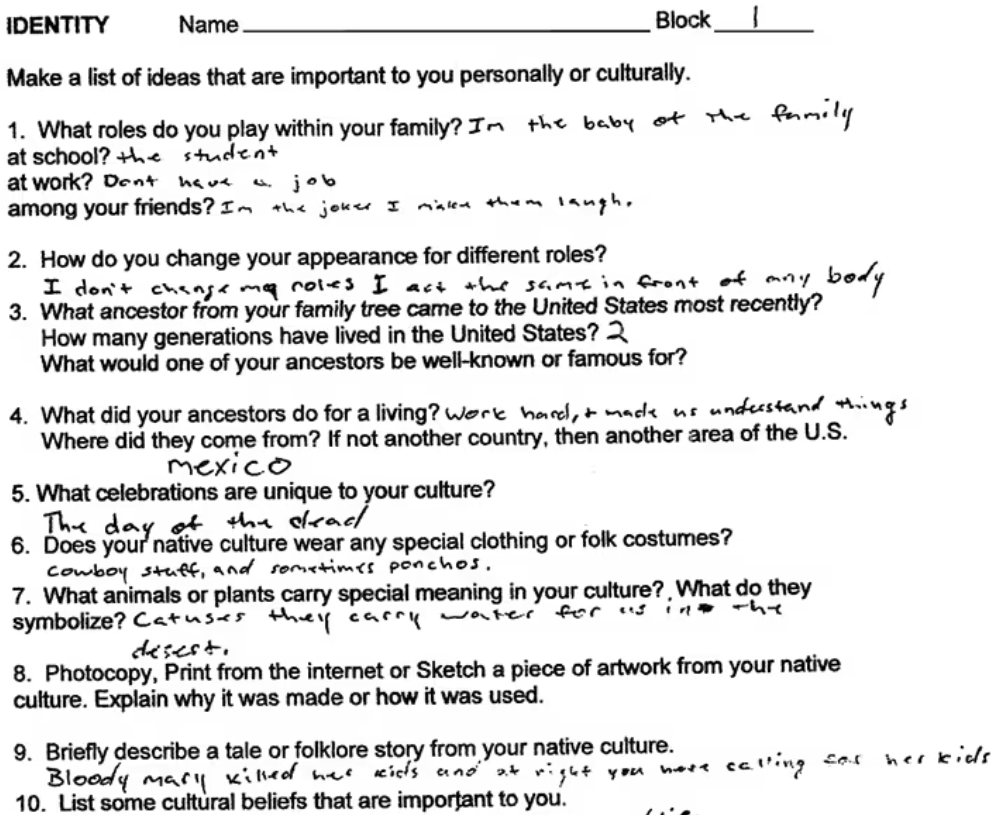
- Lower teen pregnancy rates (Goodyear, Newcomb, & Locke, 2002; Jarrett, 2011)
- Less drug and alcohol use (Kulis, Napoli, & Marsiglia, 2002; Hendershot, MacPherson, Myers, Carr, & Wall, 2005; Umaña-Taylor, 2011)

As a result, teachers who encourage CLD students to maintain their cultural or ethnic ties promote their personal and academic success. Educators have the power to create a classroom ecology that encourages students to explore their identity. This is one of the most crucial opportunities that we can provide for CLD students (Reyes & Vallone, 2007).

Tools such as the one depicted in Figure 4.1 help teachers gather useful information for understanding cultural aspects of a student's identity. This identity survey is an informal assessment in that it is teacher-created and serves classroom purposes. It is also authentic in that it uses information about what is relevant to CLD students and their real-world experiences. Information gathered from the identity survey can be used in the following ways:

Figure 4.1

Assessment Artifact: Identity Survey



IDENTITY Name _____ Block 1

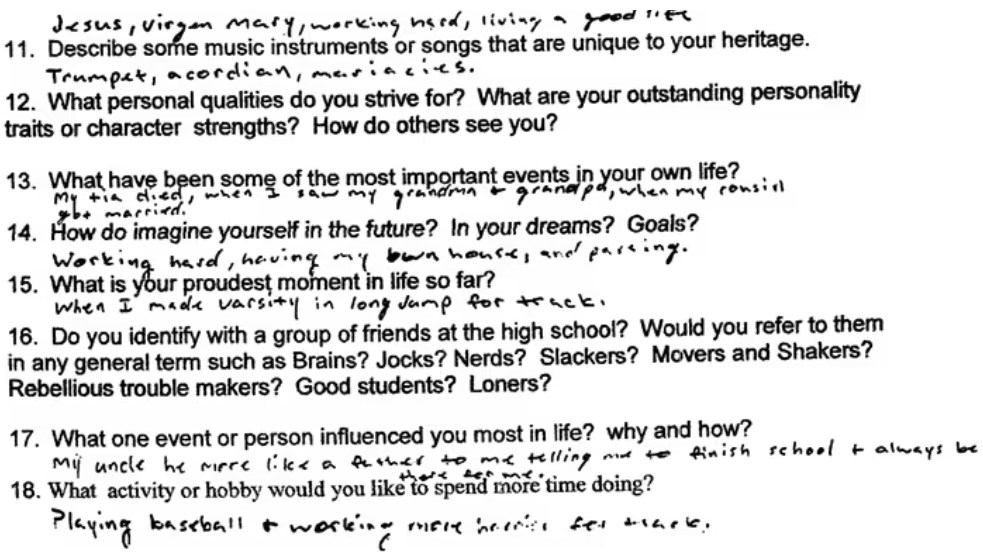
Make a list of ideas that are important to you personally or culturally.

1. What roles do you play within your family? Im the baby of the family
at school? the student
at work? Dont have a job
among your friends? Im the joker I make them laugh.

2. How do you change your appearance for different roles?
I don't change my roles I act the same in front of any body
3. What ancestor from your family tree came to the United States most recently?
How many generations have lived in the United States? 2
What would one of your ancestors be well-known or famous for?

4. What did your ancestors do for a living? work hard, + made us understand things
Where did they come from? If not another country, then another area of the U.S.
mexico
5. What celebrations are unique to your culture?
The day of the dead
6. Does your native culture wear any special clothing or folk costumes?
cowboy stuff, and sometimes ponchos.
7. What animals or plants carry special meaning in your culture? What do they
symbolize? Catuses they carry water for us in the
desert.
8. Photocopy, Print from the internet or Sketch a piece of artwork from your native
culture. Explain why it was made or how it was used.

9. Briefly describe a tale or folklore story from your native culture.
Bloody mary killed her kids and at night you here crying for her kids
10. List some cultural beliefs that are important to you.



Jesus, virgen mary, working hard, living a good life
11. Describe some music instruments or songs that are unique to your heritage.
Trumpet, acordian, mariacies.
12. What personal qualities do you strive for? What are your outstanding personality traits or character strengths? How do others see you?

13. What have been some of the most important events in your own life?
My tia died, when I saw my grandma & grandpa, when my consin got married.
14. How do imagine yourself in the future? In your dreams? Goals?
Working hard, having my own house, and parking.
15. What is your proudest moment in life so far?
When I made varsity in long jump for track.
16. Do you identify with a group of friends at the high school? Would you refer to them in any general term such as Brains? Jocks? Nerds? Slackers? Movers and Shakers? Rebellious trouble makers? Good students? Loners?

17. What one event or person influenced you most in life? why and how?
My uncle he more like a father to me telling me to finish school & always be there for me.
18. What activity or hobby would you like to spend more time doing?
Playing baseball & working more hard for track.

The responses of one CLD student to this secondary-level survey are illustrated. Questions 1 through 11 assess the student's perspectives on family, home culture, and ethnic heritage. Questions 12 through 18 assess level of acculturation, as well as how the CLD student is responding to a variety of acculturation challenges. Asking students about people or events who influenced their life is an excellent way to build community. Nine times out of ten, the person who has most influenced the student is a teacher, grandparent, or parent. Creating categories from the questions and using the information to build bridges among students often helps with the acculturation process for all students. Using the identity survey and looking for other creative ways to assess the personal common threads that students share go a long way in softening the acculturation process.

- Brainstorm connections between the content you teach and the information students document. Integrate details or experiences from students' lives into lessons.
- As you hold sociocultural conversations, get students to elaborate on what they have shared. Make connections to similar experiences you may share with the student.
- Hold instructional conversations during the lesson that bridge the learner with the rest of the community. Look for similarities and highlight them during instruction.
- Use the survey to assess where the student may have difficulty during classroom instruction. Make notes for yourself to include additional supports (e.g., peer collaboration with a classmate who speaks the same language or shares the same culture), as needed.

Cultural identity and the acculturation process are so complex and unique to the individual that educators must account for the variables that affect the family and the student at the individual level. Creating or utilizing surveys and classroom activities that inform us as teachers is critical to creating and managing an environment where the dynamic nature of every student's culture is integrated and bound within the academic content that is taught. What we learn helps us create the micro-

world within the classroom that we would like to see students experience outside of the classroom.

Voices *from the* Field 4.1

It was the month of Ramadan and a lot of our students were fasting during the month. It has been a tradition of our school to provide snacks to students every day especially when they come back from recess. One day when we were doing the snacks, some of the students noticed that their friends were not eating. This started a discussion in our usually inquisitive 6th-grade classroom. When the students found that their Muslim peers were fasting and would not be having any water or food during the day, the entire classroom voted to not have snacks during the month of Ramadan. This definitely made me very proud of my students. Our class, and the school as a whole, is really becoming more of a community.

Kendra Metz, 6th-Grade Teacher

Other factors contributing to the differing acculturation experiences of CLD students include the extent of their primary language development; second language acquisition experiences; and access to, interest in, and acceptance by the host community. Schumann's (1978) Model of Acculturation was the first to call strong attention to the correlations between second acquisition and acculturation. Schumann held that second language acquisition was significantly affected by eight key social and four psychological variables. Each of these variables is described in terms of its impact on the degree of distance created between second language learners (L2 group) and the host or target language community. According to this theory, social and psychological distance influences the nature of interactions between groups and thus the ability of second language learners to positively acculturate to and acquire the language of the target group.

The social variables included in Schumann's model are:

1. *Social dominance*—Second language acquisition is negatively affected by the perception that either the target language group or the language learner group has higher economic, political, or cultural status. This component of the model suggests that resistance to

learning another language can occur when use of that language is associated with change in social class or with a community considered disparate from one's own group. By contrast, second language acquisition is facilitated by relative equality between groups.

2. *Assimilation, preservation, and adaptation*—These are responses to the acculturation process (described further in this chapter) that Shumann correlated with specific identifiable effects upon second language acquisition. Schumann surmised that a new language is best learned when both the new and host groups desire assimilation/adaptation of the new group.

3. *Enclosure*—This concept can be pictured as one of intersecting circles, with circles representing the social spheres of each group (e.g., church, school, neighborhood, work settings). A greater number of shared settings results in a lower degree of "enclosure" and a greater likelihood of contact between the new and host groups. Situations of low enclosure foster greater language acquisition than those of high enclosure, in which there are fewer shared social settings and resources.

4. *Cohesiveness*—Schumann proposed that a group's cohesiveness affects language acquisition because less cohesive L2 groups are more likely to have increased contact(s) with the host or target language group.

5. *Size*—Individuals in large L2 communities may have fewer opportunities for contact with the host or target group.

6. *Congruence*—Contact between groups occurs more often and to a greater extent when the L2 and target language groups are more, versus less, similar. Examples of this are when different language communities share similar values, faith, socioeconomic status, and so forth.

7. *Attitude*—Language acquisition is facilitated when each group holds essentially positive attitudes about the other.

8. *Intended length of residence*—The intent of second language learners to stay longer in the host community appears to positively affect second language acquisition.

Assessment in Action 4.1

Assessment in Action

■ **Student Interview/Survey**

Student Name:_____ **Date:**_____

1. Write or draw a picture of your family. How many people live in your home? Do you have any pets? Is there extended family that lives with you?
2. Write or draw about things that are important to your family. Are there any specific things you do on a regular basis?
3. Write or draw about the things you and your family like to do on the weekends. What do you like to do for fun? Are there certain things you do every weekend? Are there things you only do on special occasions?
4. Write or draw about your parents' work. Do your parents work outside the home? Do they work during the day? Do they work at night? Are they gone for extended periods of time?
5. Write or draw about the most important person in your life. Who is the person that helps you the most? What does this person do that makes him/her important?
6. Write or draw about the things you do at home. What responsibilities do you have? Do you do chores? Do you have to watch your siblings?
7. Write or draw a picture of your favorite food. Are there any foods your family avoids? Are there any allergies in the home? Are there special foods for the everyday and special occasions?
8. Write or draw about your favorite song or TV show. Do you watch television at home? Do you watch the same shows or listen to the same songs as before?
9. Write or draw about your favorite holiday. How is it similar or different from the holidays we celebrate in class? What are some special foods, and things that you do for your holiday?
10. Write or draw a picture about your grandparents. Where do they live? Do you visit them? What do you do there?

The Role of Acculturation and Emotions

in Learning

Learning occurs interdependently with an individual's emotional state (Immordino-Yang & Faeth, 2010; Jensen, 2000; Sousa, 2017). The emotional climate of a learning situation can either hinder or facilitate a student's ability to make enduring meaning from learning experiences. When emotions are involved, it is a powerful whole-body experience. At their most basic level, emotions can boost, imprint, delay, or short-circuit almost any transmission of meaning. Stressed or disconnected students are unlikely to learn as well as those who feel secure and engaged. Because of the difficulties CLD students experience during acculturation, it is critical for teachers to determine the emotional readiness of students and create positive learning experiences for them.

Assessment Freeze Frame 4.2

> The emotional climate of a learning situation can either hinder or facilitate a student's ability to make enduring meaning from learning experiences.

Among their observations, Immordino-Yang and Faeth (2010) note:

> **If students feel no connection to the knowledge they learn in school, then the academic content will seem emotionally meaningless to them . . . if the curriculum does not support the development of emotional reactions . . . then the effective integration of emotion and cognition in learning will be compromised. For effective cognition to manifest itself in the classroom and beyond, emotions need to be a part of the learning experience all along. (p. 78)**
>
> ***Source:*** **Immordino-Yang, M. H., & Faeth, M. (2010). *The role of emotion and skilled intuition in learning.* In D. A. Sousa (Ed.), Mind, brain, and education: Neuroscience implications for the classroom (pp. 69–83). Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press, p. 78.**

This notion underscores the importance of teachers deliberately considering emotions in the

This notion underscores the importance of teachers deliberately considering emotions in the planning and delivery of their lessons. They can provide natural opportunities for students to share their emotions within the context of curricular learning by allowing them to document and discuss their personal connections to the content. When teachers encourage students to identify connections to their knowledge and experiences from home, community, and school, emotion-laden connections frequently are shared. Teachers can then use this information to inform the way they interact with students to make the content relevant, provide emotional support, acknowledge challenges, and build on demonstrated assets (e.g., novel ways of thinking about lesson topic). Considerations for planning and delivering instruction that supports learners' acculturation and emotional well-being are provided later in this chapter.

Assessing Level of Acculturation

Ms. Cantu was concerned from the outset about the veiled new girl in her class. Although Nashida was from Michigan and spoke English with virtually no accent, her style of dress suggested that she was far less acculturated than her classmates who struggled with language but had adopted much more "American" ways. Ms. Cantu worried that Nashida would be uncomfortable with the informality and open conversations about religion common among the 11th graders in this history class and wondered if she should revert to more of a traditional lecture approach to reduce the possibility of unintentional offense.

Ms. Cantu was apprehensive about her upcoming visit to the home of Nashida. She knew that inadvertent disrespect could get any relationship off to a poor start. So Ms. Cantu did some reading and contacted the local Islamic center for help. Although these efforts provided valuable insights, her anxiety rose as she approached Nashida's door. She was already slipping off her shoes as planned when a young woman in jeans, T-shirt, and flowing hair answered the door. For a second, Ms. Cantu thought it was the wrong house. Then she recognized Nashida, who excitedly welcomed her in and proceeded with introductions.

Nashida's mom noticed immediately that the teacher had removed her shoes before entering, and she smiled. Ms. Cantu could hardly take her eyes off Nashida. She looked so . . . so *American* in her trendy T-shirt and jeans. Nashida's mom requested a few moments before they started, so Ms. Cantu quietly observed as they all sat together on the couch. Nashida's mom read aloud from a list she was writing. Ms. Cantu guessed it was a grocery list because several of the words, such as *sucar* and *roz,* were similar to food words used in her childhood home. Glances at the muted television revealed an oddly familiar picture. Other than a few unrecognizable printed words, it looked exactly like the

sort of variety show her parents still watched every Saturday night. Suddenly, two little boys, powered by sound effects and dishtowel capes, sped through the room. Nashida's mom said something softly, and they answered in English, "Okay, but can we go out back?" She nodded.

During the conversation about her daughter's education, Nashida's mom smiled and nodded frequently as Ms. Cantu discussed Nashida's performance and opportunities at school. Nashida beamed and giggled at her mother's periodic and obviously humorous quips in their native language. As the visit ended, the group headed toward the door. Nashida's mom handed Nashida the list, and when they neared the door, Nashida reached behind it, quickly cloaking herself to leave. Car keys jingling, she bid Ms. Cantu a cheerful goodbye. Ms. Cantu was struck by her own surprise. Why had she just assumed Nashida didn't, couldn't, or wouldn't be allowed to drive? Why did Nashida seem so different to her now? Why had she assumed so many things based on Nashida's style of dress? Ms. Cantu realized that for all her cultural sensitivity, the limitations of her own experiences had led to a very limited perception of this student.

Acculturation is generally understood to impact the learner at two levels: the behavioral and the psychological (Berry, 1992; Searle & Ward, 1990). Behavioral aspects include areas such as language, social skills, and customs, whereas the psychological aspects have more to do with values, belief systems, attitudes, and preferences. This is important to bear in mind because assessment perspectives that emphasize primarily the behavioral or observable aspects of acculturation (e.g., customs) can lead to inappropriate assumptions about what the learner may be going through as well as inappropriate educational decisions for English learners and other CLD students.

As Ms. Cantu's scenario illustrates, it is important to avoid making assumptions and drawing conclusions about a student's level of acculturation based only on a single source of information. Rather, educators need to use multiple types of assessments to gather information for making informed educational decisions. Acculturation is often part of conversations in both preservice and in-service preparation/professional development programs for teachers and administrators. Yet determining which tools to use and how to use the results for instructional purposes often is not clearly delineated. Given that the dynamic, complex process of integration and adaption to a new community or school may progress differently for each student, both formal and informal assessments of acculturation can provide valuable insights

assessments of acculturation can provide valuable insights.

Formal Assessment of Acculturation

It is unfortunate that the assessment of acculturation does not play a significant role in decision making for placement, programming, and assessment. Few tools are systematically and consistently used in schools, making it hard to be explicit on how and when to use such tools. When tools are not readily accessible or used in schools, educators run the risk of making assumptions about the psychological state of the learner. Therefore, it is important to avoid misperceptions and to assess acculturation in a standardized way. In this section, we highlight tools that are available for this purpose. Each assesses somewhat different parameters or characteristics. Therefore, an informed review of such tools is recommended to determine which assessment tool best fits the community and targets the desired acculturation information. One of the most popular formal assessments of acculturation is the Acculturation Quick Screen III (AQS III).

The AQS III is capable of measuring the level and rate of acculturation to grade-level school culture. In addition to the uses described in Chapter 3, the AQS III (Collier, 2016) often is used (a) to make decisions about the modification of testing, evaluation, and other assessment procedures and (b) to provide an early warning system to alert that placements, services, assessments, and other aspects of schooling may be compounding the student's acculturation challenges. When the AQS III is used soon after the English learner's arrival, the findings are especially valuable for establishing a baseline from which to monitor the CLD student's acculturation and adaptation progress. In fact, the AQS III is recommended for routine use among CLD students in newcomer programs (Collier, 2016).

For purposes of monitoring, students should be reassessed using the AQS III at the same time each year. The findings of the AQS III provide a map of acculturation patterns from less acculturated to more acculturated, according to a 48-point scale. Five levels of acculturation are measured by the AQS III, ranging from "significantly less acculturated" to "in transition" to "significantly more acculturated." Long-term results have indicated that the average rate of acculturation falls between 10 percent and 12 percent each school year, and varies according to the type of assistance offered to the student (Collier, 2016).

The cultural and environmental factors identified as significant by the AQS III can serve as an index of important areas to assess, regardless of the particular tool or method used. Most acculturation

assessments require the school to gather information related to the following:

1. *Number of years in the school district.* In most cases, students who have been in a new country a relatively short time are less acculturated than those who have lived there many years. The number of years in a given school district may suggest greater or lesser acculturation, given the time in the country, due to the transitions and acculturation adjustments associated with mobility.

2. *Number of years in ESL/bilingual education.* Knowledge of a student's educational history is essential to making decisions about appropriate placement and programming.

3. *Native language proficiency.* The strength of a CLD student's proficiency in the first language (Cummins, 1984; Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1980) is positively correlated with acculturation because students are able to draw on first language knowledge to facilitate second language understandings and skills.

4. *English language proficiency.* An understanding of a student's second language proficiency is needed for teachers to be able to accommodate the student's instructional and assessment needs appropriately.

5. *Bilingual proficiency.* Proficiency in both the first and second languages correlates with indicators of mental health (e.g., lower incidence of social and emotional problems) as evidence of bilingualism and biculturalism increases (Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1980).

6. *Ethnicity/nation of origin.* A CLD student's ethnicity and nation of origin play an important role in acculturation because of the degree of similarity or difference between the new culture and the native culture (for example, those coming to the United States from western European countries versus eastern European countries or Pacific Islands).

7. *Percentage of students in the school who speak the CLD student's language or dialect.* The percentage of others in a particular school who speak the CLD student's language or dialect can also affect acculturation (Juffer, 1983). The more interaction students have with the host population, the more likely they are to acculturate to that population.

Assessment Freeze Frame 4.3

The strength of a CLD student's proficiency in the first language is positively correlated with

> acculturation because students are able to draw on first language knowledge to facilitate second language understandings and skills.

In addition to the AQS III, a number of other instruments are available to assess student acculturation formally. A representative sample can be found in Table 4.2. Because no two students will experience acculturation the same way, it is important to assess the acculturation of each individual student rather than draw broad comparisons between potentially dissimilar peers.

Table 4.2

Formal Acculturation Assessments

Acculturation Assessment	Development/Key Characteristics
Acculturation, Habits, and Interests Multicultural Scale for Adolescents (Unger et al., 2002)	The Acculturation, Habits, and Interests Multicultural Scale for Adolescents (AHIMSA) generates four subscores: United States Orientation (Assimilation), Other Country Orientation (Separation), Both Countries Orientation (Integration), and Neither Country Orientation (Marginalization). Three of the subscales were correlated with the subscales of a modified Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican-Americans-II, with English language usage, and with generation in the United States providing evidence for the validity of the scale.
Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican Americans-II (Cuéllar, Arnold, & Maldonado, 1995)	A revision of the Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican Americans (ARSMA) that found a strong link between communication and acculturation. This tool assesses a student's cultural orientation toward Mexican and European American cultures. Results can be generated that describe multidimensional acculturation types.
Acculturation Scale for Southeast Asians (Anderson et al., 1993)	The responses of 381 Cambodian, 359 Laotian, and 395 Vietnamese research participants (age 18–89) living in the United States were analyzed in the areas of language proficiencies and language, social, and food preferences. Inter-item reliability and construct validity

	were demonstrated. Among the sample population, males tended to show higher scores for the proficiency in language subscale, with Laotian and Vietnamese females scoring higher than males on language, social, and food preferences.
African American Acculturation Scale (Landrine & Klonoff, 1994)	The African American Acculturation Scale is a 74-item scale that has been demonstrated to have good internal construct and validity (Landrine & Klonoff, 1994). This scale examines acculturation in terms of eight dimensions of African American culture: (a) traditional African American religious beliefs and practices; (b) traditional African American family structure and practices; (c) traditional African American socialization; (d) preparation and consumption of traditional foods; (e) preference for African American things; (f) interracial attitudes; (g) superstitions; and (h) traditional African American health beliefs and practices.
Asian American Multidimensional Acculturation Scale (Gim Chung et al., 2004)	The Asian American Multidimensional Acculturation Scale (AAMAS) was developed to be easy to use with a variety of Asian American ethnic groups. It includes questions relating to cultural identity, language use, cultural knowledge, and food preferences.
Bidimensional Acculturation Scale for Hispanics (Marin & Gamba (1996))	The Bidimensional Acculturation Scale for Hispanics (BAS) uses 12 items (per cultural domain) that measure three language-related areas in order to provide an acculturation score for two primary cultural dimensions (Hispanic and non-Hispanic domains). To develop and validate the scale, researchers surveyed a random sample of 254 Hispanic adults. Resulting scores indicated high internal consistency and validity coefficients. The scale can be used effectively with Mexican Americans and Central Americans.
Suinn-Lew Asian Self-Identity Acculturation Scale (Suinn, Richard-Figueroa, Lew, & Vigil, 1987)	The Suinn-Lew Asian Self-Identity Acculturation Scale (SL-ASIA), modeled after the Hispanic acculturation scale (ARMSA), was designed to assess the acculturation of Asian-heritage students. The SL-ASIA measures similar factors to the Hispanic ARSMA and is

	sensitive to determining Western acculturation among Asian individuals.
Vancouver Index of Acculturation (Ryder et al., 2000)	This instrument includes 20 questions that assess interest/participation in one's "heritage culture" and "typical American culture." It is a self-report instrument that assesses several domains relevant to acculturation, including values, social relationships, and adherence to traditions. Evidence is provided for its validity. This tool is a multicultural assessment that can be used with students from all cultural backgrounds.

Formal assessment tools serve to inform teachers' instructional efforts and shed light on decisions about placement and special programming, such as special education. Often acculturation challenges are at the root of observed difficulties in the classroom. When decisions are high stakes, it is critical that the student's level of acculturation and psychological and emotional stress be considered. Decisions about programming often have long-term implications for the student.

As discussed in Chapter 1, CLD students are a highly diverse group with a wide variety of educational, linguistic, economic, and even traumatic backgrounds. Traditional lenses or screeners of academics and emotional health frequently fail to inform practices that lead to mutual adaptation of CLD students and staff. Assessments of acculturation, especially when used in a proactive rather than reactive manner, have the ability to shed timely light on individual or system needs. The insights gained regarding each student's level of acculturation serve educators in the following ways.

- Encourage consideration of factors beyond language proficiency that may impact student response to school settings, materials, and interactions.
- Lead to instructional accommodations that increase student access to learning.
- Inform the selection and interpretation of other forms of assessment (e.g., achievement, cognition).
- May reveal systemic barriers to acculturation growth, such as reliance on ESL or "tracked" courses.

- Serve as a springboard for discussions to promote CLD student participation across inclusive settings.

- Can be monitored over time as an additional or alternate indicator of educational "progress." This is especially important for accountability at both the school and individual level when supporting CLD students with limited previous schooling.

Informal Assessment of Acculturation

Whereas formal acculturation assessment tools may not be at the discretion of the classroom teacher with regard to when and how they will be utilized to inform practice, informal assessments of acculturation can take many forms, and teachers have a great deal of liberty with regard to their development and use. Home visits are an excellent way of gathering authentic insights into the culture of students and their families. Strategic use of school records and observational checklists and rubrics also yields insights into students' levels of acculturation. Activities often can be integrated into lessons without much preparation. Sometimes it is what one gathers through classroom observation and student products that best informs planning, lesson delivery, and assessment. Much can be learned about CLD students in these various ways. We will briefly discuss each.

Home Visits

Beyond the classroom walls, one of the most powerful methods of informal assessment is the home visit. When teachers visit the homes of students, they create opportunities to observe students, caregivers, and other family members in the home environment. As a result, these educators are better able to sense the stressors and challenges students and their families face on a daily basis. Although teachers may initially be apprehensive about conducting home visits due to potential language and cultural differences, such obstacles can be easily overcome with the help of a linguistically and culturally competent translator. For a more detailed discussion of home visits, see Chapter 3.

School Records

Another way to gather information on acculturation is to review a student's school records. Useful information might include the following:

- Number of years the family has been in the country
- Whether students arrived at the same time as their parents
- Country of origin
- Number of siblings and their grade levels
- Language spoken in country of origin. How does it approximate the English language?
- Family literacy practices
- Reason for move
- Parent level of education

Observational Checklists and Rubrics

Teachers can collect data through observational checklists or rubrics (see Figure 4.2), which can be used to assess many kinds of behaviors. Examples of such behaviors include the following:

Figure 4.2

Level of Acculturation Observation Rubric

LOA* Observation Rubric			
Student:			
Date of Observation:		Time of Observation:	
Criterion	**Range and Rating**	**Anecdotal Notes**	**Monitor Status****
Level of affect	5 Upbeat 0 Sullen and/or Angry		
Data:	5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1 - 0		

Level of interaction with peers of a similar culture and/or language	5 Highly Interactive 0 Withdrawn		
Data:	5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1 - 0		
Level of interaction with peers of a different culture and/or language	5 Highly Interactive 0 Withdrawn		
Data:	5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1 - 0		
Communication effectiveness with peers of a different culture and/or language	5 Highly Effective 0 Ineffective		
Data:	5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1 - 0		
Level of participation in group learning	5 Highly Participative 0 Nonparticipative		
Data:	5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1 - 0		
Level of student engagement with classroom learning activities	5 Highly Engaged 0 Not Engaged		
Data:	5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1 - 0		
Legend:			

- Communicative effectiveness with native-English-speaking peers
- Choice of language when addressing bilingual peers or those who speak English as a second language
- Large-group participation (e.g., calling out or hesitation to volunteer in large groups)
- Small-group participation (e.g., willingness to serve as group leader or offer suggestions)
- Miscommunications with culturally dissimilar peers
- Learner preferences (e.g., individual versus collective, demonstration versus recitation)

Teachers' situational monitoring of student behavior enables them to recognize signs that a CLD student may be experiencing acculturative stress or shock. Teachers can note objective physical indicators such as absenteeism, increased misbehavior during instruction, and lack of participation during class time, Indicators of social or psychological stress may be observed in school, during home visits, or as reports from a parent or guardian. Such indicators include personality changes; withdrawal; over- or undereating; behavioral incidents or referrals; conflicts with siblings or parents; and rejection of home language, customs, and foods. Teachers familiar with these issues are much better able to reduce the impact of acculturative stress on CLD students.

Activities

Throughout the acculturation process, students are aware of and question their position in the classroom. Culturally and linguistically diverse students recognize their differences, and due to this it can be hard for them to be part of the cohesiveness that teachers essentially want in their classrooms and from students. All students have moments where it is difficult to see beyond themselves and understand the diversity that exists within the classroom. To help alleviate this, activities that create an ecology where learners see themselves as part of the learning community, can help set conditions to support a culture of acceptance and learning.

Following are four sample activities: (1) My World, Your World, Our World, (2) Heritage Poem/Oral History, (3) Cultural Quilt, and (4) Sociocultural Mind Map. These activities can stand alone or be integrated into English Language Arts or Social Studies/World History lessons.

My World, Your World, Our World

Grade Level: PreK–6

Materials:

- Large poster board, cut into puzzle pieces as shown in Figure 4.3

Figure 4.3

Assessment Artifact: My World, Your World, Our World

Source: Natalie Armijo. Reprinted by permission.

For this activity, Ms. Armijo, a third-grade teacher, asked her students to think about their families and the languages they speak at home, as well as their own personal likes (e.g., favorite hobbies, sports, food). She invited them to include on their puzzle piece anything that was important to them. Students were excited to create this reflection of their lives, especially since the teachers in their building had posted their own similar puzzle pieces on one of the school bulletin boards. Reflecting on the success of this activity, Ms. Armijo shared:

> **As a teacher, I saw that my students were very eager to share about their lives. I felt like this activity communicated to my students that they matter and that they are a part of our classroom community. This activity helped me to remember that all my students' voices matter, and that students really want to share a part of themselves.**

This activity provides ready links to the sociocultural and linguistic dimensions that teachers can use to build relationships of trust with their community of learners. The connections likewise can serve as entry points to subsequent curricular conversations.

- Crayons, markers, or colored pencils for each student
- For very young children or students with interrupted formal schooling, use of magazines with pictures representing possible aspects of their backgrounds or computers with Internet access are recommended.

Directions:

1. Distribute a puzzle piece to each student. Explain that they are going to use it to draw or write their thoughts and feelings about who they are/their identities. They are to be guided by the following questions:
    a. My family (defined as the person who takes care of me), has lived in the following places.
    b. My family speaks _____ at home. (Examples: Spanish, English, Arabic, German)
    c. My family and I love to _____ when we are together.
    d. My favorite food is _____ .
    e. My favorite song is _____ .
2. After the students have finished (and depending on language level) have them turn their puzzle piece over and write something they would like the teacher to know about them or their family.
3. Have students do a connected talk where they share out things they wrote on their puzzle pieces. After one student shares, other students—one by one—add their own realities (from the puzzle pieces). This highlights for students the different ways they are connected to one another. Facilitate the conversations/sharing as needed.
4. As students share, begin to put the puzzle pieces together. Remind the students that this classroom community is not complete unless we put the pieces together. Each holds a piece of the puzzle that tells the story of this community.
5. Explain once the puzzle is together, emphasize that the final puzzle illustrates that each student brings a unique cultural and linguistic perspective, as well as other attributes, talents, and international (in some cases multinational) experiences that—when combined —make them ROCK STARS!

Observing Students:

As students work on their puzzle pieces, ask questions and hold conversations that provide you a

glimpse into the social lives of students and also help them and you make needed academic associations. These instructional conversations will help students see themselves more as a part of the learning community. They will also support you to identify how students are feeling about the learning community and how they see themselves as learners.

Differentiating Instruction:

- Think about your content standards and document for yourself links to what you are learning about the students.
- Jot down notes that will support you in making decisions about grouping configurations when you plan your lessons. You will learn your students' stories as they share, and these stories will help you make many decisions about their instructional needs.
- Make a note of those students that may need your smile and attention a little more often throughout each day.

1

Additional Notes:

This activity can be repeated three times during the academic school year. Often teachers use this as an activity immediately following standardized testing at the beginning, middle, and end of the year to informally assess changes that may have occurred in students' lives.

Heritage Poem/Oral History

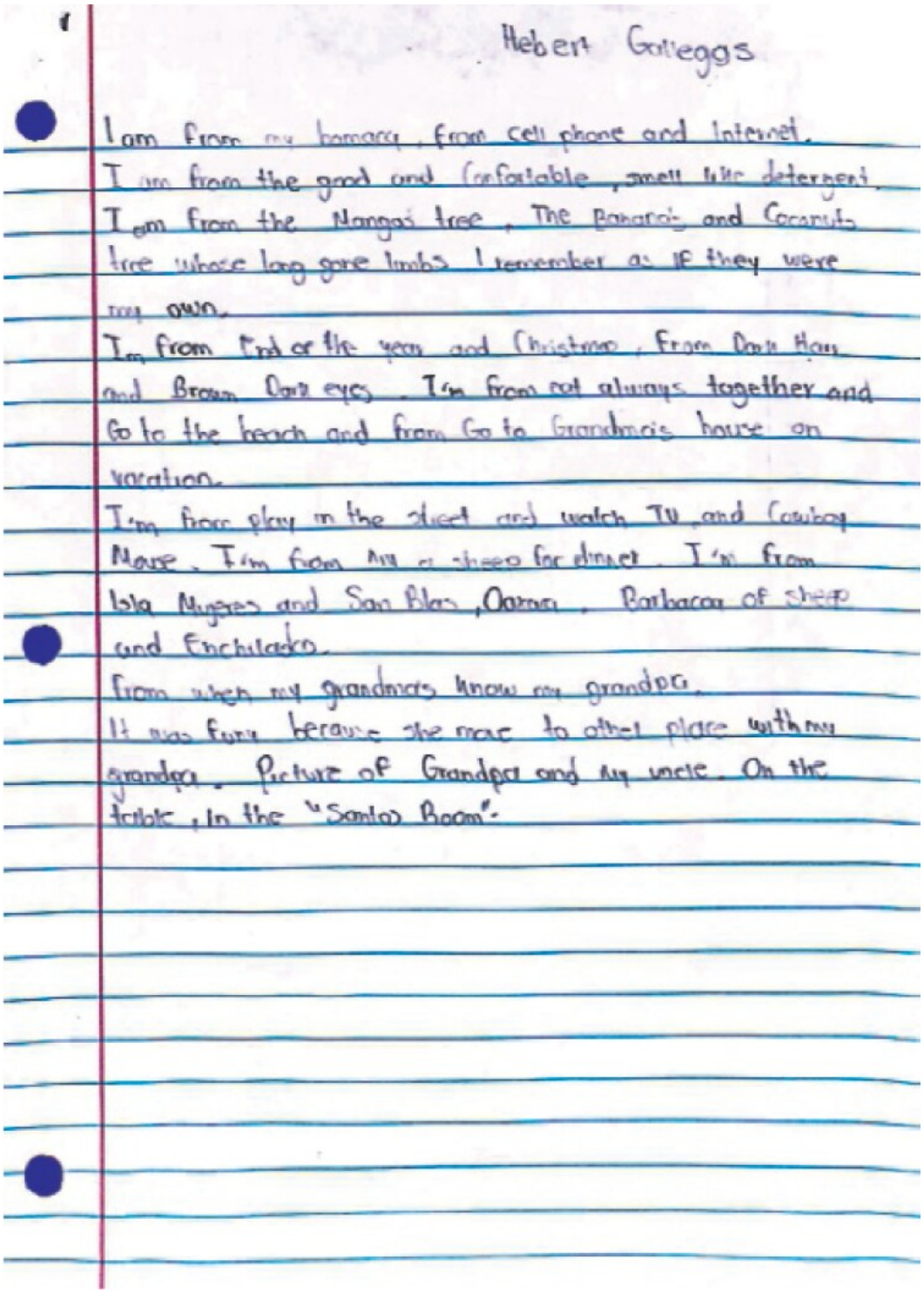
Grade Level: 8–12

Materials:

- Resources (websites, articles, books) based on the countries, states, and communities represented in your classroom
- Guiding questions
- Sample of a heritage poem/oral history (See Figure 4.4)

Figure 4.4

Assessment Artifact: I Am Poem



Hebert Garieggs

I am from my bamarey, from cell phone and Internet.
I am from the good and Confortable, smell like detergent.
I am from the Mangos tree, The Bananas and Coconuts tree whose long gone limbs I remember as if they were my own.
I'm from End of the year and Christmas, From Dark Hair and Brown Dark eyes. I'm from not always together and Go to the beach and from Go to Grandmas house on vacation.
I'm from play in the street and watch TV and Cowboy Movie. I'm from Ate a sheep for dinner. I'm from Isla Mujeres and San Blas, Oaxaca. Barbacoa of sheep and Enchiladas.
From when my grandmas know my grandpa.
It was funn because she mare to other place with my grandpa. Picture of Grandpa and My uncle. On the table, In the "Santos Room".

This poem reflects the writing of a Hebert, a high school student at the early intermediate level of English proficiency. From this poem, the teacher is provided with many points of entry into conversations about his background and potential connections to the curriculum. For instance, the prominence of mangos, bananas, and coconuts in his home country help provide a setting for past experiences. Important celebrations in his life include Christmas, end-of-year festivities, and beach-time vacations with his grandmother. Hebert shares information about leisure activities and foods connected to

personal memories, and he references extended family members who have played a role in his life. The "Santos (Saints) Room" is another connection that the teacher could easily inquire about in order to better understand Hebert's home culture.

Directions:

1. Discuss with your students what can be gained by understanding our cultural heritage (we all started somewhere).
2. Share your own heritage and how it has influenced your own life.
3. Have students write a version of an "I Am" poem. To do this, provide students with the following prompts/guiding questions.

Possible guiding prompts:

- Ancestral ties (Where did I/we begin our journey? What roads have been traveled?)
- Family members and relatives (Let me tell you about my roots, where I come from, the people who inspire me to keep learning and moving forward. They come from . . . , I have learned . . . , I am inspired by . . . .)
- When I think about where I come from and what I what I would tell others about who I am, what I want, and what I think, I would tell them the following: _____ (e.g., place of birth, about me, my highs and lows, personal goals).
- Places of residence: _____ (A written history of stops along the path that has led me here today.)
- Family customs (I am . . . languages, holidays, celebrations, traditional clothing)
- Favorite food(s) (I live for eating _____ at my _____ house.)
- Challenges of adjustment (I face challenges . . . I am driven forward by. . . .)
- For my continued journey, I wish the following: _____ .

3

Observing Students:

As the poems are being written, enter into conversations with students that support each to think deeper about who they are and where they fit in your classroom.

Differentiating Instruction:

As you read the poems, document important information that will support your planning and delivery of lessons. For example, you may find out that some students work all night to help support the family financially. From your observations, create a "Find Some Who" activity to have students learn about each other (see Figure 4.5). Your making students' lives a part of the daily curriculum will speak volumes about the level of your investment in them, as unique human beings and as learners in your classroom.

Figure 4.5

"Find Someone Who" Activity

Find Someone Who . . . !!!		
Find someone who is from Mexico. Name:	Find someone who grew up with mango trees. Name:	Find someone who comes from a big family. Name:
Find someone who makes empanadas. Name:	Find someone who celebrates Ramadan. Name:	Find someone who is from Guatemala. Name:
Find someone who celebrates Christmas. Name:	Find someone who is from Afghanistan. Name:	Find someone who has gone to the beach. Name:
Find someone who is from Honduras. Name:	Find someone who makes tamales. Name	Find someone goes to church on Sundays. Name:

Additional Notes:

This activity is used to build relationships with students and is recommended to be used at the beginning of the year or as new students arrive. It is not intended to be completed for assignment of a grade. The information provided sets the stage for entering into both academic and sociocultural conversations. The prompts, when possible, should be developed by the teacher based on the culture of the school, the content area being taught, and what teacher knows and would like to know about the community of learners.

Cultural Quilt

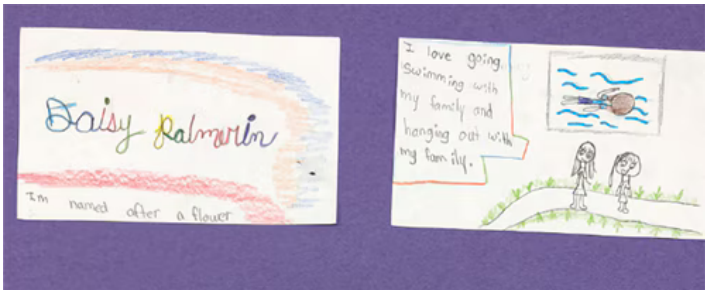
Grade Level: PreK–6

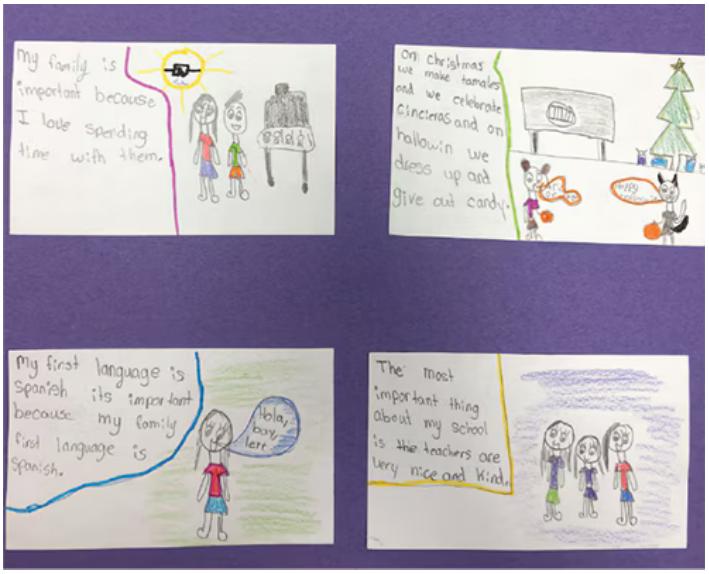
Materials:

- 3 × 5 cards (six per student)
- Crayons, markers, or colored pencils for each student
- Yarn (Enough to sew all the cards together at the end to make a quilt for each student)
- For very young children or students with interrupted formal schooling, magazines with pictures representing their background can also be used.
- Sample of a cultural quilt (see Figure 4.6)

Figure 4.6

Assessment Artifact: Cultural Quilt




My family is important because I love spending time with them.
On christmas we make tamales and we celebrate Cinciras and on hallowin we dress up and give out candy.
My first language is Spanish its important because my family first language is Spanish.
Hola, boy, Jerr
The most important thing about my school is the teachers are very nice and kind.

Ms. Clark implemented the Cultural Quilt activity with her fourth-grade students to support them, and herself, in learning more about their class as a community and as individuals. In addition, she decided to take the activity to the next level by involving parents and families in the process. Ms. Clark explained:

> **I made this a home/family activity. Students were able to tell me what they knew**

about their family, culture, language, and themselves here at school and then they took their project home for their family to help them add any other things to their cards. . . . I was able to tell which students love to be creative and draw and which ones do not. I also used it this week in our language arts lesson. This week's topic is culture and about passing down stories. I had one student who on his culture card wrote "telling stories." I had him share with the class what kind of stories his family shared and why that was important to him.

Overall, the activity provided the opportunity for students to discuss their lives with one another. It also provided the teacher with a source of connections to students and their families, cultures, and languages that she could then draw upon to enrich her instruction.

Source: Victoria Clark, Reprinted by permission.

Directions:

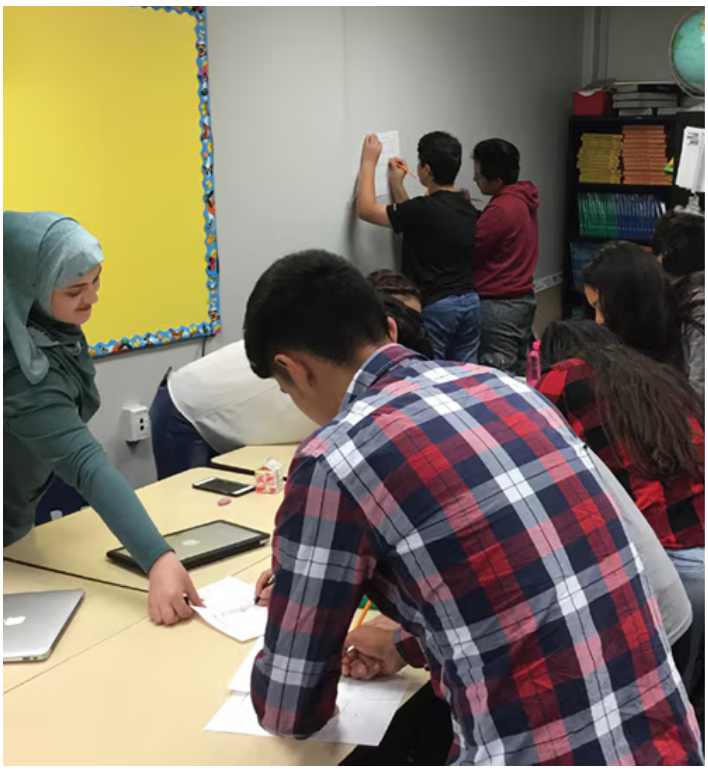
1. Give each student a set of six 3 × 5 cards.
2. Explain that each student will use these cards to share about their life using drawings (and words for older students). Highlight that students each have their own story. Some might have been born in the local community. Others have traveled long distances to be here.
3. Share with students that they have two options regarding their quilt.

    - They can use the cards to create a timeline of their journey.
    - They can use the cards to write about themselves.

Possible prompts to generate thinking about a journey:

- In what country were you born?

- How old were you when you came to the United States (e.g., baby, young child, a specific age)?
- Who came with you when you traveled?
- What type(s) of transportation did you use to get here?
- Did you stop at other places on the way to this community?
- What does your home look like here?



This activity was created using the "I Am" poems written by high school students at the early intermediate level of English proficiency. In the photograph, students race to ask and answer questions about themselves in order to complete each box on the sheet. The teacher enjoyed this activity because it prompted all students to produce language. Students were engaged with everyone else in the class, communicating with peers who speak different native languages as well as those who share the same home language. When teachers use students' reflective writing to build up the classroom community, they send the message that they care about each individual learner and their lives beyond the classroom.

Possible prompts to generate thinking about themselves:

- The most important thing about my name is _____.
- The most important thing about me is _____ .

- The most important thing about my family is _____ .
- The most important thing about my language is _____ .
- The most important thing about my culture is _____ .
- The most important thing about my school is _____ .

4. Ask students to draw a picture for each of the prompts. Younger children may use pictures from magazines if desired. Older students can add words for each picture.
5. Use yarn to sew together the quilt pieces.
6. Have students share their finished quilts with their peers.

6

Observing Students:

Observe students as they create their cultural quilts. Hold a conversation with students who struggle, so that you can listen to their ideas and give suggestions regarding what they might draw on their card.

Differentiating Instruction:

- Help students see the similarities and differences in their cultural quilts: family, favorite things, etc. Also have students explore similarities and differences in journey timelines. Highlight the uniqueness of each student's life. Make notes about these aspects of your students' lives for your own future reference. These insights will inform your decisions about grouping and can energize your efforts as you find ways to relate the curriculum to students' lives.
- Have students find commonalities that they all share. Record these on chart paper and post for the class's future reference. Even in very culturally diverse classrooms there are commonalities that we can all relate to that help bring us together. When misunderstandings or tensions among students arise during the year, as they inevitably do, remind learners of the aspects that unite them as equal members of the learning community.

Additional Notes:

Select literature that can take the class back to their quilts during the year. This will help students to see themselves in text and in the curriculum. You might also find it useful to use literature prior to having students create their quilts. For example, the teacher might begin a 2- or 3-day project by reading *The Josefina Story Quilt* (Coerr, 1986). In the story, the protagonist creates a quilt of her journey to California. To help students apply the concept to their own lives, the teacher then would ask students to create their own cultural quilts.

Sociocultural Mind Map

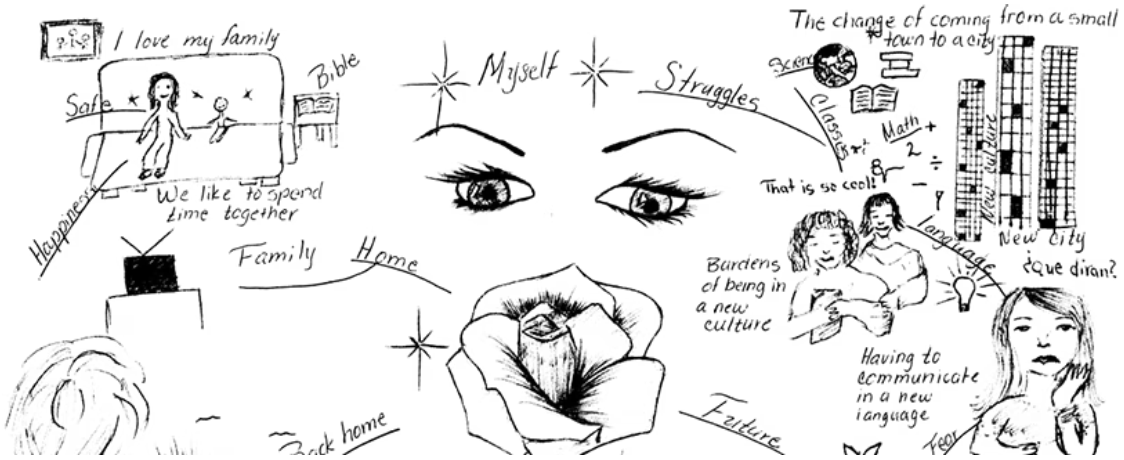
Grade Level: 4–12

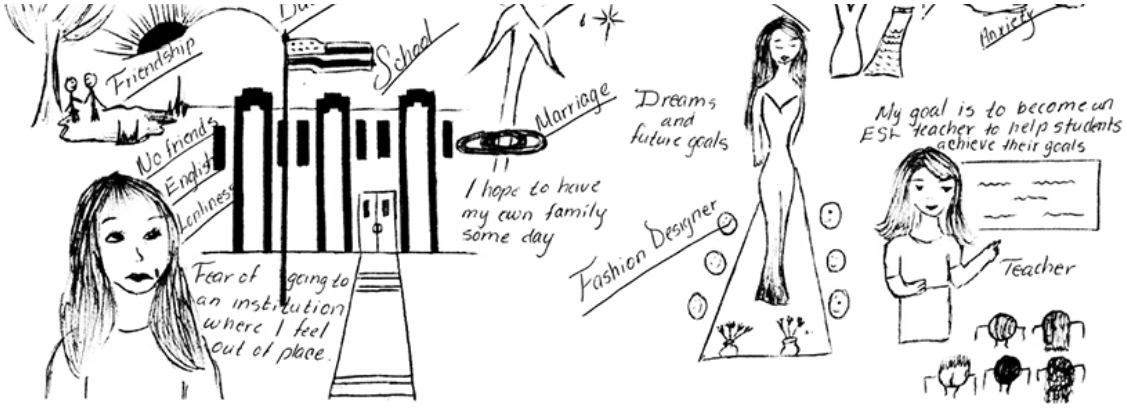
Materials:

- One blank piece of paper for each student
- Crayons, markers, or colored pencils for each student
- Sample of a mind map (see Figure 4.7)

Figure 4.7

Assessment Artifact: Sociocultural Mind Map



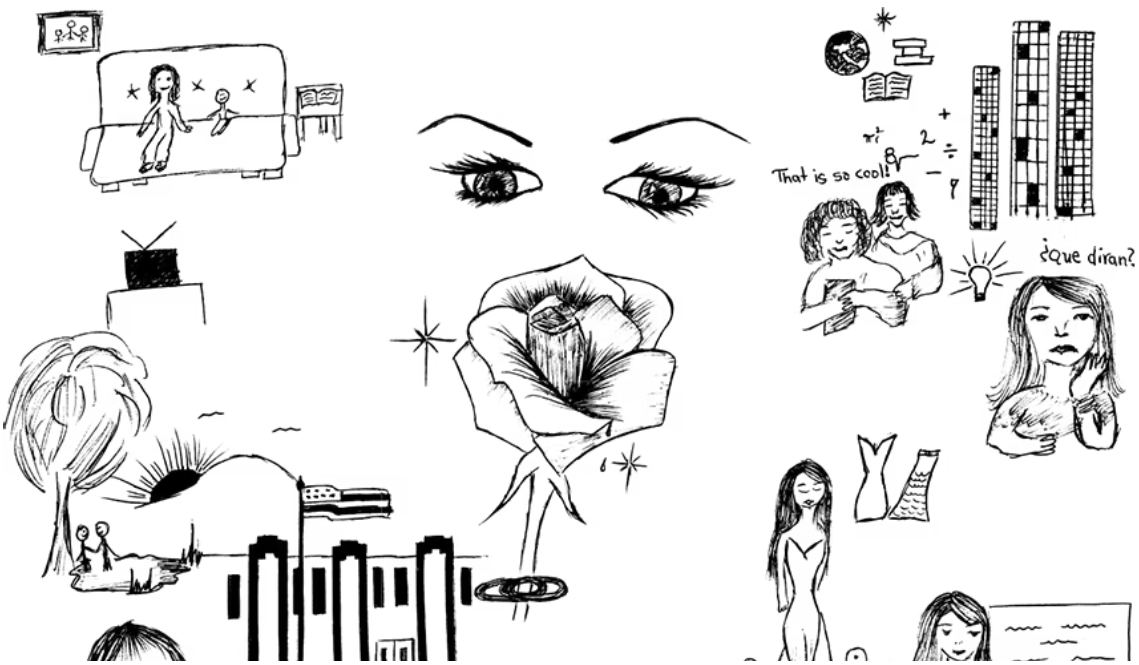

Friendship
School
Marriage
No friends
English
I hope to have my own family some day
Fear of going to an institution where I feel out of place.
Dreams and future goals
Fashion Designer
My goal is to become an ESL teacher to help students achieve their goals
Teacher

Directions:

1. Provide each student with a piece of paper and writing/drawing utensils.
2. Explain to students that they will create a mind map using pictures and words to represent themselves. Possible ideas include perceptions of self, personal goals, academic interests, career goals, friendships, family, and cultural or language transition experiences.
3. For students who need additional support, have them begin by creating a Cultural Mosaic (see Figure 4.8).

Figure 4.8

Assessment Artifact: Cultural Mosaic



- To do this, have students capture the same ideas using only drawings.
- Then discuss the mosaic with the student. Jot down words, phrases, and ideas that the student connects with the illustrations.
- Have students use the words you recorded to support their addition of words to their mosaic. The end result is a mind map.

4. Have students share their mind maps with a partner or small group.
5. Display completed mind maps to celebrate the richness of the community of learners.
6. As an extension of the activity, have students write an explanation of the various elements of their mind maps.

7

Observing Students:

As students work on their mind maps, ask questions and hold conversations that provide you with insights into their cultural and linguistic backgrounds, struggles, hopes, and dreams. Attend to acculturation challenges that surface. Make note of support systems available to students (e.g., family members, friends). Listen for career goals and other interests that serve as sources of motivation for learners.

Differentiating Instruction:

- Document notes for yourself that can later support decisions about grouping.
- Record ideas for making lessons relevant to learners, based on what you learned.
- Make note of students whose work product or conversation with you provide an indication of significant emotional challenges or other struggles. This will enhance your ability to provide them with supports that can increase their engagement and success.

provide them with supports that can increase their engagement and success.

8

Additional Notes:

This activity can be repeated three times during the academic school year. Often teachers use this as an activity to find out about their students' backgrounds at the beginning of the year. Then they have students create a new mind map midyear, after teachers and students have had a chance to develop higher levels of trust. Using the tool at the end of the year provides students with opportunities to envision and incorporate new goals and aspirations that can carry them through the summer and into the next academic year.

Mind maps (Buzan, 1983) are increasingly being used for both instruction and assessment in both elementary and secondary classrooms. The potential contributions of mind maps to assessing CLD students are multifaceted. A mind map often brings to the surface information relating not only to acculturation and the sociocultural dimension of the CLD student biography, but also to the cognitive, academic, and linguistic dimensions. The following scenario illustrates these potentials:

Julianna, an 11th-grade student who arrived 6 months ago from Mexico, developed a mind map (see Figure 4.7) from the cultural mosaic (see Figure 4.8) she was asked to create in Mrs. Villareal's language arts class. In an informal interview, Julianna discussed her mind map with Mrs. Villarreal. Their discussion revealed details of Julianna's prior socialization patterns, as well as her new acculturation experiences in the United States.

From this conversation, Mrs. Villarreal learned that the rose in the center of the mind map portrays Julianna's love for nature. Julianna was born in a rural community of Mexico and has found the transition to urban living difficult. She misses the time, access, and friends with whom she used to enjoy nature and the outdoors. The rings, on the other hand, depict Julianna's desire to someday have a family.

The illustrations in the upper left-hand corner of Julianna's mind map portray the relative safety,

comfort, and pride she recalls about living in Mexico. Her drawings indicate that family and religion were of particular comfort to her, despite the poverty in which she and her family lived.

To the right of this point in the mind map, the illustration of the eyes represents Julianna's soul. She told Mrs. Villarreal, "If you pay attention [to these eyes], you can see what's inside me [e.g., the tears that have fallen upon the rose]." Like many other CLD students, Julianna often feels ignored and sometimes lost in many of her classes.

In the upper right-hand corner, the buildings characterize the new city in which Julianna lives. For Julianna, the many sociocultural transitions from rural small-town life to urban living have been challenging. Note the illustrations and passages below and to the left of the buildings. The phrase "*Que diran*?" expresses her concerns about what other adults and fellow students will think and say about her appearance, her culture, and her language.

The light bulb and associated passages represent the knowledge Julianna feels she brings to the classroom—knowledge she believes is little recognized by her new teachers, especially her prior knowledge of science and mathematics. Julianna considers herself a good student in science and very much enjoys studying this subject. According to Julianna, the illustration below the buildings further depicts her sadness about the fact that no one knows about her knowledge, her aspirations, and her desire to make new friends like those she had in Mexico. For Julianna, friends have always been the source of her strength and her motivators in school. Now that she lives in a new city and has few friends to turn to, she increasingly struggles to cope with the many challenges of immigration and academics in a new school system.

The illustrations and passages in the lower left-hand corner of Julianna's mind map show the difficulties she faces trying to succeed in a new school system. Her lack of friends, difficulties with the English language, and increasing loneliness each further complicates the fears she already has of "feeling out of place." In fact, the illustrations that surround the tree indicate that Julianna, amidst her many struggles, is often drawn to memories from her prior socialization, especially memories of nature and fun with her friends.

Finally, the illustrations and passages in the lower right-hand corner portray her dreams, goals, and aspirations for the future, including her future beyond school. Along with her desire to have a family, Julianna's mind map suggests that she envisions herself as a career woman. She considers both a career in fashion design and a career as an ESL teacher to be within reach.

In summary, Julianna's mind map reflects the powerful potential of this tool to accomplish the following:

- Prompt CLD students to explore and discuss difficult issues they might not otherwise talk about.
- Reveal student interests and academic potentials.
- Assess student struggles with acculturation issues.
- Serve as a focal point of discussions for assessing sociocultural, academic, cognitive, and linguistic experiences and challenges.

0

The aforementioned activities constitute but a sample of the many informal classroom assessments teachers can use to gather information about CLD students and their acculturation experiences. Activities and projects that involve parents and other family members are especially helpful for promoting family ties that support students through the acculturation process. Informal assessments that incorporate multiple forms of communication (e.g., drawing, discussion, writing in either the native language or English) enable maximum participation of CLD students who are in the beginning stages of acquiring English and transitioning to a new culture. Such opportunities allow students to share their unique perspectives in multiple and often surprising ways.

Snapshot from *Classroom Practice* 4.1

This picture depicts an informal way through which Ms. Foiles, a 4th-grade teacher, decided to gather information about her students. Often students feel shame about living with grandparents, aunts, or host families, especially in the case of refugee children and adolescents. Informal activities such as this, which provide a canvas for students to share who they are, create a space for them to disclose personal information in a nonthreatening way. Using students' responses to the activity as a starting point, the teacher can gather more information about the family, and the country of origin. The teacher also can gather books that may interest the student. Building relationships begins with cultivating connections that have been shared by the student. A teacher's creativity and imagination is the only limit for what is possible.

Carol Foiles

I am in 4 grade. I am (ethnicity): Chinese I speak: Chinese (L1) English (L2) My family is from (country of origin): United States	Here is a picture of my family:
Here is a picture of one of our cultural traditions/celebrations called: Chinese New year 	Here is a picture of the country I am from. The name of the country is: ching
Here is a picture of me doing my favorite thing, which is: Swiming 	Here is a picture showing what I like most about my culture. It is a picture of: Chinese Noodles
Here is a picture of one thing that has been hard about "fitting in." It is a picture of: Making new friends	One thing I wish my teacher(s) knew about my culture was: the chinese language

1

Using Acculturation Information to Inform Instruction

The assessment tools discussed in the previous sections support educators in making decisions about the best course of action to take when planning, delivering, and assessing instruction. Formal assessment tools provide point-in-time information, whereas informal assessments provide in-the-moment guidance to keep the student moving forward as the lesson unfolds.

Planning Tips:

- Look for ways to connect concepts and other content to what is learned from formal and informal acculturation assessments, such as family traditions, literacy practices, countries of origin, and community experiences.
- Learn about the grammatical structures of the student's language and hold individual instructional conversations to point out similarities and differences. Help alleviate student stress by supporting learners to understand that they often are merely transferring what they already know to a new language.
- Provide personalized feedback to students on written work that clearly communicates your awareness of their background by calling attention to things you remember learning from them during formal or informal assessments.
- Make notes on your lesson plans to remind you of the little things that will make the student feel part of the learning community.

Instructional Tips:

- Start the lesson by sharing your content and language objectives. Remind students that they are learning new words that they may already know in their language. That is, they are

they are learning new words that they may already know in their language. That is, they are acquiring new labels for existing concepts.

- Explicitly make sociocultural connections to content throughout the lesson. For example, keep in mind what the student may already know about the content you are teaching (e.g., What does the student know about war, multiplication, rainforests?).

- Throughout the lesson, build in opportunities for students to discuss connections to their native languages and home cultures with peers. As a teacher, it is important to understand the language and culture of each student. These opportunities for discussion allow teachers to glean insights through purposeful listening. They also support the building of trust that leads students to feel safe and accepted in a new learning environment.

- Scaffold learning for students, as needed, to bridge from the schooling context of their primary socialization (e.g., in the home country) to the new one. For example, explaining differences in the way math problems are worked in the home country versus the new country can go a long way in reducing confusion for students.

- When configuring pairs or small groups, think about where the student is in the acculturation process, and group students based on their sociocultural and linguistic needs. Think of students in your classroom that are accepting of others and who will help the CLD student become part of the learning community. Small groups allow for students to interact with additional peers, each of which can provide a different kind of support (sociocultural, linguistic, cognitive, academic). All students have something they can learn from others.

2

In classrooms where teachers are faced with students from different socioeconomic backgrounds, languages, and countries of origin, the art of assessing who students are and what assets they bring to the classroom is critical. A growing number of schools, districts, and states recognize the relationship between acculturative adaptation (which does not negate the student's primary cultural and language identity) and student academic success. "Knowing that many ELLs [English language learners] define their 'cultural identity' by the *language* and *ethnicity* of the sociocultural group to which they feel connected supports the necessity to include students' native language during instructional and non-instructional time" (Indiana Department of Education, 2005, p. 2). Policies that value native language use stand in stark contrast to past policies, which often promoted academic environments in which students were humiliated, punished, or forbidden from using their home language at school. For many students, hearing and seeing their native language as part of the environment and during instructional time serves to validate their language and culture—and

themselves as individuals. Chapter 5 discusses the role of the native language and how teachers can incorporate native language support into their instruction.

Cultural Differences as Learning Assets

A group of Midwestern teachers reviewed the following dilemma:

Mrs. Bingham is concerned because Joel rarely completes his math homework. The homework usually consists of 20 to 25 practice problems involving computation skills he has learned and has been able to perform in class. Joel's mother is single, and her evening attention is split among cooking, cleaning, laundry, and bathing the little ones. However, she tries her best to help Joel in whatever ways she can. Joel has several older and younger siblings, so Mrs. Bingham is concerned that the home environment is interfering with his ability to do homework. She suggests to his mother that Joel be provided a quiet place to work without distraction for a certain period every night. Joel's mother agrees to keep his siblings out of their shared bedroom, but they continue to play at the door. The teacher then advises her to "shut the door for half an hour . . . or until Joel gets the work done." After several weeks, there is little improvement in Joel's homework.When the group of experienced teachers was presented with this scenario, their comments and observations included the following:

- "I feel sorry for the mom."
- "That's the problem with so many of our students."
- "Clearly, there is no way he can study in *that* home."
- "Perhaps there is an after-school program where Joel could do his homework."

Although their comments reflect empathy for Joel and his mother, this empathy is inadequately rooted in preconceived ideas about what constitutes study and the notion that large families are distractions rather than resources. The teachers' comments were in response to the following question, which had been crafted to inspire insights about cultural assets: "Given Joel's collectivist culture, what other kinds of solutions may have been generated if Joel and his mother were involved in identifying their own resources and solutions?" Despite this prompt and the teachers' previous exposure to professional development (which included the cultural concepts of individualism and collectivism; see Table 4.3), only one teacher made a comment that reflected the

desired consideration: "Maybe Joel isn't comfortable being alone . . . isolated. Is there a way the kids could do their homework together?" This particular teacher was from a CLD family herself, and she more readily saw that the family might be more comfortable working together.

Table 4.3

Key Features of Individualism and Collectivism

Individualism	Collectivism
Home Cultures That Value and Promote Individualism	**Home Cultures That Value and Promote Collectivism**
Encourage the understanding of the physical world as knowable or manipulable, irrespective of its meaning for the members of the culture	Encourage the understanding of the physical world in the context of its meaning to the members of the culture
Promote independence across members of the culture and individual achievement	Promote interdependence among members of the culture and group success
Value egalitarianism, role flexibility, and upward mobility	Value stable, hierarchical roles associated with gender, family background, age, etc.
Foster self-expression, self-directedness, and personal choice	Foster adherence to cultural norms, respect for authority, deference to elders, and group consensus
Favor individual ownership and private property	Favor group ownership and shared property

3

Once the educators discussing Joel were allowed to benefit from another perspective, they were able to see how the dynamics of his home situation could facilitate his learning in a variety of ways. Additional ideas generated included have Joel use interactive games and activities to practice skills with his siblings. One teacher, who had characterized the original situation as "a mess," suddenly realized the inconsistency of her own views. After all, she was a strong proponent of cooperative

realized the inconsistency of her own views. After all, she was a strong proponent of cooperative education as a way to provide authentic, differentiated, and natural models for learning. Why had she not seen before the benefits of bringing these practices home where they could be made even more powerful by involving parents or siblings? As a result of this professional conversation, several teachers added optional forms of home practice (e.g., games) that resulted in more actual opportunities to practice the concepts and skills than the old worksheets.

Many teachers of CLD students have discovered that acculturation can prove a mutual (and mutually beneficial) process. Increased contacts with diverse students often result in the type of reflection that fosters significant personal and professional growth among education personnel. The ability to identify cultural assets to which one is not accustomed and view them from an alternate perspective is similar to experiences with optical illusions. Many of us have looked at a picture, certain of the *one thing* it depicts . . . only to have someone else point out a completely different image or way of perceiving the work. Suddenly, those things our minds did not allow us to see before become glaringly obvious.

4

It is important, therefore, for educators to realize that cultural assets enhance the student's acculturation process—not detract from it. The scenario provided at the beginning of this section illustrates, for example, the characteristic of ***familism***, the tendency to value family and family goals above those of the individual. When this trait is studied in CLD families, high degrees of familism correlate with positive interpersonal relationships, strong family unity, the ability to work with others toward shared goals, and close ties to extended family (e.g., Esparza & Sánchez, 2008; Garriott, Raque-Bogdan, Zoma, Mackie-Hernandez, & Lavin, 2016). Indeed, many in the fields of education and psychology have extolled the importance of cultural values, such as familism, to the health, engagement, and persistence of CLD students (e.g., Germán, Gonzales, & Dumka, 2009; Romero, Robinson, Haydel, Mendoza, & Killen, 2004). One need not sever ties nor abandon values to build new relationships within, and learn the alternate norms of, a new society. We as teachers simply need to explore alternative ways of interpreting the world, through the eyes of students and families, and seek input from cultural insiders when outcomes do not match what we hoped to achieve.

Knowledgeable educators recognize that there are many ways to incorporate and affirm the strengths and cultural assets of CLD students. Supportive teachers (and schools):

- Convey a climate of affirmation and celebration of the languages and cultures represented.
- Make use of professional development opportunities in the areas of acculturation and

- Make use of professional development opportunities in the areas of acculturation and second language acquisition, to inform their instructional practices.
- Regard CLD student cultures and languages as enriching assets.
- Advocate for curricula and use resources that reflect the cultures and values of the student populations represented.
- Build in opportunities in every lesson for students to share with peers how the content connects to their worldviews.
- Create home–school connections through the following:
    - Opportunities for parents, caregivers, and other family members to share experiences and knowledge related to topics the child is learning
    - Home visits and informal conversations that emphasize relationship-building and respect for the family's knowledge and expertise

Assessment Freeze Frame 4.4

> It is important for educators to realize that cultural assets enhance the student's acculturation process—not detract from it.

Keep in mind that effective student instruction and accommodation require the combined efforts of students, parents, and the community. Families have unique abilities to support and guide students toward success. Community members represent an additional source of knowledge, insight, and experience. Table 4.4 supports educators to examine their own perspectives regarding the assets that students, parents, and communities bring to the education process.

Table 4.4

Sociocultural Environment: Educator Views of Student, Family, and Community Assets

Level of Performance				

Component	Meets Criteria	Basic Needs	Improvement	Unsatisfa
Culture	The student's culture is respected and valued as a source of knowledge and experiences that advance learning and enhance the cultural climate of the school. Issues and behaviors related to acculturation processes are identified and mediated with sensitivity and knowledge of research-based approaches that are appropriate for the CLD student/family/ community involved.	The student's culture is respected and valued on principle. General implications and stages of acculturation are understood as influencing student learning and behavior. Recognizes but is unable to comfortably mediate cultural misperceptions and conflicts between families and self or other staff.	Behaviors that arise from cultural differences or acculturation are viewed as interfering with student achievement and long-range success. Instructional strategies and interventions emphasize acculturation to the dominant culture.	The CLD student's culture is viewed as a negative influence o student an school. Cultural considerati are rejecte irrelevant t developme appropriate instructiona practices a intervention
Language	Supports L1 use at home and school. Understands, models, and is able to explain the rationale for L1 and sheltered instructional strategies. Is knowledgeable	Supports L1 use at home. Understands basic language acquisition stages and time lines. Can explain the benefits of sheltered instruction	Regards continued use of home language as an obstacle to English acquisition and school success. Is supportive of, but cannot	Regards th student's h language a deficit to b overcome. Is unsuppo of ongoing adaptations instructiona modificatio for CLD

	is knowledgeable about language acquisition phenomena, including language loss and implications of language support, or lack thereof, on student achievement.	instruction. Considers CLD student's language as potentially affecting behavior and/or achievement.	describe or model, instructional strategies that benefit CLD students.	students.
Academics	Is able to articulate the relationship between L1 and L2 learning and analyze classroom tasks in terms of prerequisite language, academic, or social experiences. Makes specific recommendations regarding instructional modifications and assessment of CLD student progress.	Understands the impact of language and acculturation on CLD student academic progress. Identifies general instructional strategies that benefit CLD students.	Provides strategies to meet the academic needs of general students performing below grade level but does not understand or provide strategies particular to the needs of CLD students.	Considers academic difficulties CLD stude to be eithe environme or innate a therefore is resistant to long-range change regardless interventio
Families	Exemplifies a respect for CLD families that is evident through greetings, verbal and nonverbal	Expresses respect and value for CLD families. Encourages	Feels that truly interested families are already involved.	Regards C families as unsupporti education. Is opposed

	communication, and overall accessibility. Advocates for programs, events, and activities that engage families. Demonstrates an understanding of, and respect for, culturally different family dynamics. Respectfully mediates cultural issues and behaviors that conflict with a student's positive school participation.	CLD family involvement but has little direct contact with parents beyond those required by policy or events. Recognizes when cultural issues affect school–family communications but does not initiate or engage in actions to address potential conflicts or concerns.	Communication with CLD families is limited to required procedural or behavioral matters.	initiatives o incentives increase C family involvemer Avoids communica with CLD families.
Community	Is knowledgeable about, and communicates with, community resources that can provide or assist CLD students and families. Regards community resources as potential assets and partners in the educational, linguistic, and social–emotional	Is knowledgeable about and appreciates, but does not personally communicate with, community resources that can provide or assist CLD students and families. Recognizes selected organizations (e.g., religious	Provides CLD students/ families with referrals only to school-based professionals such as social workers, nurses, and counselors. Does not communicate with community or seek additional resources for meeting the	Speaks in generalities about community support bu feels resou and influen in the stud community conflict wit school idea what "is be for the stuc Is unable o unwilling to provide resources

	learning of CLD students. Involves members of the local neighborhood and CLD community in schoolwide events and	fraternal) as valuable to the positive overall development of CLD students.	essential and/ or enrichment needs of CLD students and families.	contacts appropriate the needs CLD stude and familie

Impact of Acculturation on Appropriate Methods of Assessment

Although a primary emphasis of this chapter is on the assessment of acculturation, it is also important to understand the impact of acculturation on assessment in general. CLD students often arrive with cultural values and behaviors that differ from the Western cultural perspective on which so much of our educational system is based. Traditional assessment practices typically value individual achievement, competition (ranking), and recitation of knowledge. Therefore, many traditional approaches to assessment favor students who bring strong, existing competencies in the expectations of the dominant culture. By contrast, the CLD student may not able to do the following:

- Understand the cultural assumptions of assessment prompts that are grounded in the dominant culture (e.g., that pizza slices are cut into even proportions).
- Be comfortable demonstrating knowledge in ways that he or she perceives are condescending or might cause others to lose face (e.g., provide the answer to a question another student missed).
- Be motivated by competition, speed (faster is better), or nonsocial reinforcers (e.g., grades).

7

Because the goal of assessment is to determine *what* and *how* the student learns in order to inform instruction, assessment methods that do not account for acculturation only serve to cloud the teacher's ability to gain anything valuable from their results.

Understanding how acculturation affects student performance is key to recognizing how inadequate traditional assessments are for measuring what we really need to know: *Is this student learning?* Each CLD student, by the very nature of age and cultural difference, develops along multiple physical, emotional, linguistic, cognitive, and acculturative continua. Testing students according to static, predetermined points of learning, especially when they already feel overwhelmed or unready to demonstrate their capabilities, can lead to frustration and the belief that there is little hope for their success in the classroom. As many of us have experienced on a personal level, being subjected to assessment practices that emphasize what we *don't* know rather than what we *do* know—along with those that result in negative consequences (e.g., failure, overt/covert comparison to others)—can significantly undermine our attitudes about education . . . and ourselves.

Teaching Tips:

- Communicate to students and their families that your focus will be on growth.
- Encourage students by building on the positive (e.g., existing language skills, conceptual knowledge, and academic abilities).
- Assure students that formal tests are just a moment-in-time; they tell us nothing about the student's potential.
- Review assessment materials for cultural bias.
- Hold conversations with students about their thinking processes if they have incorrect responses on an assessment that seem odd, given your formative observations of their learning.
- Explore students' thought processes if you see patterns of incorrect items; rule out the possibility that the student misunderstood the directions or expectations of the item format.
- Explain your perspective on expectations for student interaction, and allow students to share their perspectives/norms with you.
- Through your actions and communications with students and families, demonstrate that you value open, honest, two-way communication about the child's education, including assessments.

8

Programming-Related Issues: Assessment of Acculturation

Issues of placement and programming for CLD students who are acquiring English as a second language are topics beyond the scope of this text. Nonetheless, the results of assessing acculturation, content-area skills and knowledge, and language proficiency can aid decision making associated with these issues. Therefore, the following discussion highlights grade-level issues of acculturation assessment that are relevant to the identification, placement, monitoring, and exit of CLD students. This discussion is by no means exhaustive, but provides a synopsis of issues that should be considered.

Identification

Acculturation status is an essential component of the larger body of information collected when identifying CLD students for alternative language programs. Students with lower levels of English language proficiency may experience concurrent issues of acculturative stress or, in some cases, culture shock. Such stress can affect the ability of students to demonstrate their actual abilities through language and content-area assessments. Therefore, it is important to allay student fears during the formal assessment process and emphasize informal assessment information, which is generally obtained in less anxiety-provoking contexts.

Placement

Levels of acculturation and the degrees of difference between the home and host culture can help determine the most appropriate instructional placement and approaches for CLD students. An unaccommodating classroom can greatly hinder the academic success of students, especially those in early stages of acculturation. Such students may benefit from extensive opportunities to draw on their native language and culture as learning assets.

Monitoring

CLD student acculturation, along with language acquisition, should be monitored across settings. Negative acculturative phenomena, such as deculturation or rejection, will require attention to both individual student needs and the educational environment. Home visits and conversations with parents can provide critical insights into how students can best be assisted through their acculturation journeys.

Exit

It is important to realize that CLD students who have met the language and achievement criteria to exit alternative language programs may continue to require supports and affirmation. Even after students exit a program, such support is often necessary for positive cultural identity development and acculturation processes that lead to integration or adaptation. Students who integrate aspects of the host culture to form a bicultural identity are able to draw on the strengths of both cultures to overcome personal and academic challenges. Such individuals are also better able to help fellow students facing similar acculturation challenges.

Three Dimensions of Language

As educators, language acquisition is the first concept that we grapple with as we begin helping students transition to their linguistic journey in a new language. However, the first question that we often ask of ourselves is, "How proficient is the student in his or her language abilities?" We want to have a baseline measure of students' language abilities. Language acquisition and language proficiency are two related but distinct concepts that need to be unpacked as we think of assessments, interventions, and instructional decisions for students.

Language acquisition is the process of becoming successful at understanding and using a language. Although different theories exist to explain the phenomenon, typically developing children are able to associate abstract features of a language they hear (or see) with inherent rules about the content, form, and use of that language (Bloom & Lahey, 1978; Wright & Kersner, 2015). For this natural process of first language acquisition to happen, children must be exposed to authentic communication and have opportunities to use the language for real purposes. Culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students likewise must have opportunities for authentic and purposeful use of English if they are to acquire the language.

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Language proficiency, on the other hand, refers to students' ability to perform in a language. Four domains of language typically are assessed: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Ideally, the assessments we use to evaluate language proficiency yield results that inform our understanding of individual students' progress in English language acquisition.

A brief exploration of isolated features of language will support our ongoing discussion of the relationship between language proficiency—assessed through both formal and informal means—and language acquisition, which should be one of the targeted goals of our daily instruction. We will frame this exploration around the three dimensions of language: form, content, and use.

Form

Form is the structural aspect of language that involves attaching some symbol to the meaning being expressed. The symbol can include the spoken word, a picture, or a gestured sign. Form also refers to the structures we create by combining symbols such as words to make sentences (*syntax*). It includes additive forms, such as suffixes, that we add to words to refine the meaning of our message (*morphology*). It also includes the sounds and patterns of sounds in a language that we use to form words (*phonology*).

Syntax

Syntax refers to language-appropriate word order. Chomsky (1968) has argued that all languages and dialects share a universal grammar. Humans are predisposed to attend to and develop detailed patterns of language. The features each group chooses to highlight, or mark, may differ but each is complex in its own way (Fenk-Oczlon & Fenk, 2014). Yet the conventions of "standard" English are among the benchmarks by which a person is deemed proficient in the United States. As with all skills, the ability to use English syntax in ways that reflect those of native speakers is acquired developmentally over time.

For example, young native English speakers, as well as new-to-English speakers who have yet to distinguish between subject and object pronouns, commonly produce sentences such as "Her went to the store." CLD students who are acquiring a second language (L2) may initially combine L2 words and first language (L1) syntax patterns. For example, the Spanish sentence "Yo tengo un perro *chiquito*" ("I have a *little* dog") is structured with the modifier following, rather than preceding, the noun. For this reason, many native Spanish speakers initially produce sentences such as "I have a dog *little*." With time and experience, most CLD students can automatically differentiate these patterns as specific to only one or the other language.

Teachers often conduct assessments of syntax in their classrooms when they give students a set of words and ask to put them in order. Careful attention to students' responses enables educators to understand gaps in syntactical understanding. They then plan interventions and instructional practices accordingly.

Morphology

Morphology refers to the rules and patterns for changing words to alter meaning by way of tense, person, number, and so forth. For instance, the addition of *ed* to most verbs tells us we are referring to a past event ("I walked"), but the addition of *s* to many verbs usually indicates a present-tense action by a third person ("She walks"). It violates the commonly accepted rules of English—and therefore sounds awkward—to say "I walks" or "She walk." As with syntax, CLD students must not only master English morphological conventions but also differentiate those from the conventions of their first language.

Consider how additions of prefixes such as *dis* or *un* can completely change the meaning of a word (*dis*agree, *un*tie). Although students might be fully aware of the added prefix or suffix, they may not be able to grasp the changes in meaning as a result of the additions. As we support learners to attend to such additions to words, it is important to highlight contextual use of the words. This allows students to understand the meanings of the words themselves, as well as their constituent parts.

Phonology

Ms. Murillo presented Ezequiel with a quick set of prompts to check his knowledge of opposites.

Ms. Murillo: What is the opposite of *up*?

Ezequiel: Down.

Ms. Murillo: Empty*?*

Ezequiel: Full.

Ms. Murillo: Dead?

Ezequiel: Mom.

Ms. Murillo: (pause) . . . Um, not Daaaaaad . . . *dead.*

Ezequiel: Oh, alive!

Ms. Murillo: Heavy?

Ezequiel: Not heavy.

Ms. Murillo: False?

Ezequiel: Stands.

Ms. Murillo noted four out of five correct on Ezequiel's chart. Which response did she consider incorrect? Ezequiel realized that *heavy* is an adjective with which it is appropriate to use the modifier *not*. Ms. Murillo knows this realization demonstrates an important element of linguistic comprehension but does not demonstrate Ezequiel's ability to provide an appropriate opposite. By contrast, his most blatant "error" came when he heard Ms. Murillo say *falls* instead of the word *false*. Seemingly incorrect, Ezequiel's response of *stands* is actually an appropriate opposite for the word he believed Ms. Murillo to have said: *falls*.

In this scenario, phonology lies at the root of the misunderstanding. Phonology refers to the sound system of a language, the manner in which phonemes (distinct sounds) can be combined to create meaning. Phonemes in one language may not be phonemes in another. If a sound is phonemic, it may change the meaning of a word.

For example, the sound /z/ (as in *zip*) is not a phoneme in Spanish. The Spanish language does spell words with the letter *z,* but the sound produced is like the English language *s.* For instance, *taza* (cup) sounds like *tasa.* There are no sounds in Spanish like the one English speakers associate with the letter *z.* Consequently, native Spanish speakers such as Ezequiel are not as attuned to distinctions between /s/ and /z/ as are native English speakers, for whom *zip* and *sip* are very different words with very different meanings.

Assessment in Action 5.1

Assessments can provide invaluable insights into students' developing language skills. One area of assessment that is growing in importance and relevance is preassessment of phonological skills. Phonological skills refer to the student's ability to recognize, discriminate, and manipulate the sounds or sound units of language. Research on English speakers has shown that skills are strongly predictive of literacy development (Yesil-Dagli, 2011).

For CLD students, phonological skills in the primary language have been found highly predictive of literacy success in both L1 and L2 (Branum-Martin, Tao, Garnaat, Bunta, & Francis, 2012; Durgunoglu, Nagy, & Hancin-Bhatt, 1993; Yeung & Chan, 2012). Because a child's brain has had

Burgunoglu, Nagy, & Hancin-Bhatt, 1998; Young & Chan, 2012). Because a child's brain has had more exposure to the sounds and patterns of his or her primary language, the child will often initially be more adept at demonstrating and learning these skills in that language (Coleman & Goldenberg, 2010). Transfer of skills from one language to another suggests there is value in measuring and teaching these skills in whatever languages possible in a given setting (Cárdenas-Hagan, Carlson, & Pollard-Durodola, 2007; Kuo, Uchikoshi, Kim, & Yang, 2016; Luo, 2014; Sun-Alperin & Wang 2009).

Following are a few assessments that would be considered as point-in-time assessments. Even if conducted over time and incrementally, assessments such as these only give us a snapshot of students' skills. These assessments are beneficial, however, because they can point us in the direction of interventions and instructional practices that are likely to help students' advance in second language acquisition.

Assessment of Phonemic Awareness for Pre- and Nonreaders

1. **Imitation of Auditory Patterns***

Instructions: Tap or knock *X* number of times. Encourage the child to imitate by saying, "Do this," and by using the equivalent saying in the child's native language (e.g., "Haz esto" for Spanish speakers), or by using gestures to convey the instruction. Note the child's response by recording the number of times he or she tapped.

	Student Taps
1. X	
2. XXX	
3. XXXX	
4. XX	
5. X	
6. XXX	
7. XX	

8. XXXXX	

2. Syllable Segmentation with Physical Cues

This may be done using native language words, English words, nonsense words, or a combination of these. (Please circle stimuli types used for this task.)

Instructions: Say a word with the targeted number of syllables. Say it again slowly, tapping, clapping, or jumping once to each syllable count (e.g., Tap two times as you say "*ca-sa*" [Spanish for *house*] and three times as you say "bas-ket-ball"). Ask the child to join you. Once he or she can perform this task well in unison, have him or her imitate your performance with new words, tapping for each of the syllables. If this is easy, give the child words to segment independently. Use two to three words comprising the different numbers of syllables and note the child's responses. (Use "+"to indicate a correct response, and "–" to indicate an incorrect response.) Teachers can then use these data to inform their instruction of readiness skills.

(imitation)	L1	L2	Nonsense
1 syllable			
2 syllables			
3 syllables			
4 syllables			
(independent)	L1	L2	Nonsense
1 syllable			
2 syllables			
3 syllables			
4 syllables			

3. Auditory Discrimination

Instructions: The student will need to understand the concept of sameness. If the student is young, point to his or her shoes, nod, and say, "Same" ("*Iguales*" [Spanish translation], etc.). Then put your shoe next to one of the child's, shake your head, and say, "No, not same." Do this several times with environmental objects (e.g., pencils, blocks).

Using two identical objects such as blocks or pennies, touch each as you repeat the same word "car–car." Do this several times and model a "thumbs up" or nod as you affirm their sameness. Then take two dissimilar objects (e.g., a block and an eraser) and touch each for dissimilar words "car–milk." Shake your head and model "No, not same." It is not necessary for the student to use words such as *same, different,* or *not same* to perform this task. Any reliable gesture (head shake/nod or thumbs up/down) will do. Encourage the student to watch your mouth as you say the words and note if he or she can determine whether the following pairs of words are the same (head nod) or not (head shake).

				L1 words:
car–car		spoon–spoon		
milk–milk		spoon–soon		
candy–candy		chair–chair		
apple–dog		made–mad		
apple–apple		eat–eat		
banana–spoon		cup–come		

4. Structured Rhyming

An example of how to elicit structured and independent rhyming is included in a subsequent section of this chapter (see the Oral and Written Cloze Assessments section). Although it is not necessary to probe the student's skills using all stimuli types mentioned below, the distinction of language used will inform instructional planning for this student.

		L1		L2		Nonsense
Recognizes rhyme		yes/no		yes/no		yes/no
Selects rhyming word		yes/no		yes/no		yes/no
Offers rhyming word		yes/no		yes/no		yes/no

5. Sound–Syllable Blending

Instructions: To determine the level(s) at which the student is able to blend sound segments into words, you say variously sized segments of the word aloud, and the student then combines the segments to produce the whole word. You may need to begin by using something visual or tangible to demonstrate the desired behavior. For example, lay a token down for each syllable as you say "back-pack" or "wa-ter-fall." Then push the tokens together and say the entire word. The student's familiarity with the vocabulary will be a factor in his or her ability to understand the purpose of this task. Familiar words from the child's L1 and L2 as well as nonsense words can be used for this assessment. Children who are shy or not yet comfortable speaking the target language can demonstrate skills by pointing to the appropriate picture among a set provided by the teacher. Present several words for each of the following three levels to discover the student's instructional readiness. Note the student's responses.

		L1		L2		Nonsense
1. By syllable ("bu-tter-fly")						

2. Initial sound + remainder of word (“r-ock”)						
3. By sound (“d-e-s-k”)						

Phoneme/Syllable Deletion†

Instructions: This skill is often not evident in the preschool years but becomes very relevant for previously unschooled students or struggling early readers. This skill can also be demonstrated with colored blocks or other items to represent the sound or syllable segments being manipulated. To assess elision (the deletion of a sound or syllable), tell the student:

1. Say “hot dog.” Student: “hot dog”

   Now say it again, but don’t say “hot.” Student: “dog”

2. Say “hamburger.” Student: “hamburger”

   Say it again, but don’t say “ham.” Student: “burger”

3. Say “baloney.” Student: “baloney”

   Say it again, but don’t say “low.” Student: “bunny”

4. Say “bake.” Student: “bake”

   Now say it again, but don’t say “b.” Student: “ache” (Be sure to pronounce sounds rather than say letter names.)

5. Say “meat.” Student: “meat”

   Now say it again, but don’t say “t.” Student: “me”

6. Say “cloud.” Student: “cloud”

Now say it again, but don't say "k." Student: "loud"

Feel free to substitute words with similar patterns and expand on this list. Note below words and responses generated while assessing elision in the student's primary language:

Source: Selected items adapted from the †Test of Auditory Analysis Skills (TAAS)(Rosner, 1993)

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Language production "errors" are often recognizable as features of a person's accent. However, teachers' interpretation of student performance becomes more accurate when they are aware of ways phonological perception may influence what students hear and how they answer. This awareness also helps the teacher highlight pronunciation differences in strategic ways during daily lessons, especially when students are learning new content vocabulary.

Content

Teachers had come from different schools to staff a newly opened elementary school. The students were largely CLD learners who had been transferred from overcrowded schools in adjacent areas. Their principal, Ms. Houston, had been fortunate to attract many talented teachers to the new school. Within a month, however, the excitement began to wane.

It appeared that the students had widely varying skill levels. Many didn't return homework and "lacked the oral language" needed to talk about content, much less learn new vocabulary at the recommended pace. Prescribed lessons entailed heavy use of repetitive response drills to help students remember the word definitions and examples provided by curricular scripts. Fidelity to scripts was promoted to ensure that all students received the same instruction, with nightly homework sheets to cement the skills. Teachers noticed that those students who *already* were successful participated the most, and with greater success.

Other students could repeat back the prompts used to teach, but they not discuss the material or apply concepts with any depth. It reminded Ms. Sami of how she only memorized terms long enough to pass the high school anatomy tests—until the chapter on skin. She had been to a dermatologist and she also liked having her nails done. Word parts like "derma" and "cutaneous"

dermatologist and she also liked having her nails done. Word parts like "derma" and "cutaneous" (cuticle!) hit home. This prompted Ms. Sami to wonder aloud, "Is it possible that all the structure designed to *equalize* access may actually be *impeding* some students' more personal and powerful connections to the vocabulary words?"

Another teacher jumped in, "How do we know our families *don't* have experiences with the concepts represented by academic vocabulary? I can't tell you how many times a cognate or discussion of home experience has given instant *life* to "new" words. It's so much more powerful than memorization. Besides, the only students completing the homework pages regularly are those who already find it easy, or have parents who do." Others agreed.

Ms. Houston summarized, "So, I'm hearing a few themes. One is that the district-provided lessons don't necessarily facilitate connection. The other is that homework may not be helping. In fact, many of you feel the practice sheets:

- Reinforce students' self-perceptions as either a learner or a struggler
- Further disadvantage parents who have less time to sit with each child or who are less proficient in the school language
- Don't significantly impact oral language development

These are keen observations. Homework is definitely an area we can adapt." Together they decided to try something radically different. Students in all grades would have no homework assignments other than vocabulary, and the format of the vocabulary homework also would change.

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Teachers used the subsequent fall conferences to learn more about students (see Figure 5.1) and gain insight to home language development. They explained the new homework approach to parents. A letter also was provided, translated into the languages spoken by area families (see Appendix B). Each week, all students would be assigned targeted vocabulary, just as before. Several teachers, however, wanted to add power by opening with a strategy to activate background knowledge. They were willing to share these ideas and experiences during professional development time. Insights gained during conferences and through activation could then be referenced while teachers presented the standard district materials and visuals.

Figure 5.1

Questions for Parent and Caregiver Conversations

Conference Dialogue Questions

- What would you like me to know about your child?
- What are your child's interests?
- What activities does your child like to do?
- Does your child like to read?
- What excites you about your child?
- What does your child like to do with friends?
- How does your child feel about school?
- Where does your child feel the most success?
- What do you like to help your child with the most?
- If you could choose a goal for your child, what would it be?
- We need your help with homework. *(Describe the vocabulary activities and how those at home can help.)*

Source: Michele Ingenthron, Wichita, KS. Reprinted by permission.

There were minor differences in the formats used for home practice. In all cases, students had opportunities to learn and talk about the words before taking them home. Most homework involved taking home a graphic organizer, with individual or group notes developed during activation and connection in class. Students were not required to rewrite or memorize definitions. Instead, the

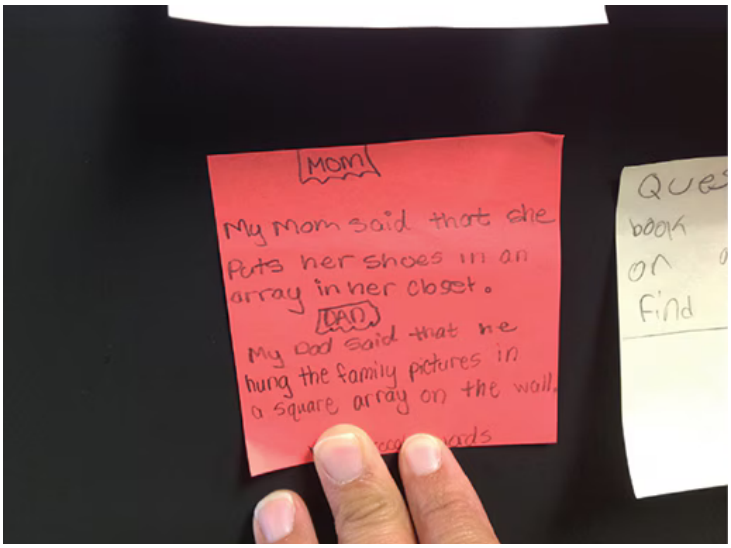
connection in class. Students were not required to rewrite or memorize definitions. Instead, the only requirement was to go home and talk to a parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle, neighbor, or sibling. Students were to share their understanding of what these words meant and *listen* to the thoughts, examples, or questions parents had for each word. The parents' job was simply to talk, adding personal connections and home language words (or dramatizations) wherever possible for each idea. Above all, these conversations were to occur in the language of the home and heart.

The next morning, students had a chance to share with tablemates what they had learned or heard in those home discussions. Ideas were written on sticky notes, which were added to the vocabulary organizer or poster used by each class (see Figure 5.2). There was an immediate positive response from all stakeholders. Teachers noticed not just improved scores on weekly quizzes but increased oral and written use of the new words across settings. These were truly evidence-based results!

Figure 5.2

Assessment Artifact: Vocabulary Insights from Home

Students have the opportunity to talk to parents, caregivers, and others about their connections to words being studied at school. In this example, the student provided the perspectives of both parents on the word "array."


MOM
My Mom said that she puts her shoes in an array in her closet.
DAD
My Dad said that he hung the family pictures in a square array on the wall.
book
on
Find

Images Source: Natasha Reyes, Wichita, KS. Used with permission.

Teachers can display, celebrate, and build upon home vocabulary connections during instruction. Doing so communicates the shared community of the class and the unity among parents, students, and teachers as they work toward common goals. Facilitating connections between background knowledge and the curriculum also promotes student comprehension and retention of learning.

9

The voices of the following teachers illustrate the benefits of the new homework policy for the learning community:

> **I have never had parents and kids so excited to do homework before. The parents can go home and have conversations with their kids and there's no right or wrong answer. It's just using the vocabulary. And we found that kids are vertically aligning their vocabulary K–5. That's the way the district is set up, so it's nice to have brothers and sisters able to have conversations about the same words and they can build relationships that way, too. So it's all about building relationships and making parents confident to talk to their kids at home.**
>
> **Chelsea Johnson, Second Grade Teacher. Reprinted with permission.**

> **I got a very positive response from parents and students about it. The students that even had behavior issues at home and school said, "I love it because I can sit with my mom or my dad and just talk, and I'm not in trouble." And it's very positive. Parents said that they loved it because it was stress free and even my student that had a lot of behavior issues said, "I love that my Dad will just talk to me and it's one of the only times that we really do talk." So it was a very positive experience in my classroom.**
>
> **Bridget Luiano, Fifth Grade Teacher. Reprinted with permission.**

Bridget Lujano, Fifth Grade Teacher. Reprinted with permission.

This scenario illustrates the power of building vocabulary instruction upon the existing languages and experiences of students, families, and community members. It also highlights how teachers' willingness to think outside the box can set into motion more effective teaching and learning practices. With relatively little effort, teachers were able to increase the relevance of their grade-level curriculum for students while also supporting stronger bonds within families and the community.

Most of us master the form (syntax, morphology, and phonology) of our primary languages as children. However, our skill with the content, or meaning, of language continues to develop and grow throughout our lives. *Semantics* relates to the meanings of words, phrases, and sentences. Meaning can be expressed by our choices of words, their endings or prefixes, and the order in which we arrange them. Therefore, most of us choose our words rather carefully based on the meanings we believe they hold and the message we want to convey in a given context. For teachers, it is important to remember that vocabulary, to a large extent, is gained and retained through interactions with people and print outside of educational settings. With this in mind, homework of the nature described in this section's vignette is beneficial to advancing students' (and families') continually developing semantic knowledge.

Semantic knowledge is the most readily transferred aspect of language. It is much easier to connect the new form (word) with an already understood concept than it is to learn a concept one has never been exposed to (in a language not yet fully understood). Even if there is not an exact translation, every word has semantic features or meaning associations that function like Velcro hooks. These understandings provide added "stickiness" for new related words. The more words known in the native language, the easier it is to learn new words in *any* language.

As we teachers work to support students to develop semantic skills, we also must consider the difference between a child's ability to make meaning when words are present in isolation versus

Use

CLD students are learning not only new sounds and words but also detailed, yet often unspoken "rules" about how such words can be marked and combined (or not) to communicate effectively

with the new language "code." Actual use of a language requires an understanding of how to use the language in varying contexts and for a multitude of purposes. *Pragmatics* refers to ways in which social context and experience influence the interpretation of language. Such influences depend on the speaker, listener, setting, and intent rather than on just the static meaning of the spoken words.

For example, depending on the people and their relationship, interaction style, situation, and nonverbal cues, the word *great* can be used as a sincerely positive or a sarcastically negative comment. Let's consider a simple exchange:

Jack: It's starting to rain.

Saul: Oh great.

of the message. The study of pragmatics encompasses a variety of both blatant and subtle, as well as verbal and nonverbal, features of language. These features can dramatically influence how a message is delivered and perceived. Most people generally understand language pragmatics as the appropriateness of the communication action or intent in context.

The pragmatics of a situation always should be considered an influence on a student's response. For example, in many languages—including English—it can be considered redundant to repeat the subject of a question in the response. For most of us, "What is the boy doing?" will elicit a response that directly answers the question, such as "Riding a bike," without the additional phrase "The boy is . . . " Unfortunately, it is common to find prompts requiring an artificial construction (e.g., repetition of the subject when the subject is already understood) on tests intended to measure a child's content knowledge or language skills. Such prompts may penalize students who provide the more natural fragmented response.

Language is complex, and mere knowledge of its structure is insufficient. Language also is

acquired at the level of ***communicative competence***. Effective communication demands that we know what to say, when to say it, to whom to say it, and under what circumstances (Kayser, 2008). The answers to such questions typically lie in the dynamic norms of varying linguistic and social groups.

In addition, most speakers, regardless of background, shift their manner of speaking or style depending on the situation. To illustrate, depending on the formality of a workplace, it may seem unusual to hear someone speak to a boss in the same manner he or she would use with close friends or family. In addition to tone of voice, speakers who are ***style shifting*** also unconsciously adjust vocabulary, syntax, intonation, and grammar to fit the discourse style necessary for that particular setting or purpose. Style shifting is a sophisticated skill, and weaknesses in this area can be socially awkward. CLD students who demonstrate communicative competence are able to communicate effectively in a variety of social groups.

2

Assessing Levels of Language Proficiency

Federal legislation often stipulates that schools must meet certain requirements in assessing the English language proficiency of CLD students. These criteria seek to enhance the alignment of instruction, learning, and assessment while increasing school and district accountability for student success. Standardized tests are usually a key component of recommended guidelines. This can move the focus of language assessment from communicative authenticity (informal assessments) to the type of validity attributed to well-developed standardized assessments (formal assessments). Both types of assessment provide important information for identification, placement, monitoring, and exit from language programs.

Formal Assessment of Language Proficiency

The formal assessment of CLD students whose primary language is not English has become a recurrent focus of policymaking, research, reform, and debate in education. Educational reform initiatives, especially those at the federal level, are often the impetus behind these trends in education. The most recent of these reform initiatives have advocated standardized formal assessments, the results of which are thought to be comparable across school districts and across states. Consequently, the emphasis of language programming for CLD students is increasingly grounded in standardized assessments of language proficiency.

A variety of formal assessments are available and have been used to assess different aspects of language proficiency. These generally include specific tasks designed to measure students' listening, speaking, reading, and writing capabilities. Most formal assessments are not conducted by classroom teachers and therefore are beyond the scope of this text. However, intuitive teachers of CLD students use the results of such assessments in planning and delivering accommodative classroom instruction. These teachers learn about the nature of formal assessments used by their school district, as well as general guidelines for interpreting the student outcome reports (results) generated by each type of assessment.

Table 5.1 provides examples of formal assessments of language proficiency. Classroom teachers are encouraged to visit the testing agency's website or contact the agency's commercial or institutional representative for more specific information about particular versions of formal standardized assessments. Teachers can also benefit from reading the work of researchers who strive to contextualize the assessment process for schools and educators who serve CLD students (e.g., Rhodes, Ochoa, & Ortiz, 2005).

Table 5.1

Formal Assessments of Language Proficiency

Assessment	Key Characteristics
The Dos Amigos Verbal Language Scale (Critchlow, 1996)	This assessment uses 85 pairs of opposites in Spanish and English to measure conceptual linguistic knowledge. Qualitative results provide information about

(Critchlow, 1996)	knowledge. Qualitative results provide information about relative proficiency in each language. The provision for qualitative interpretation also facilitates a more holistic picture of proficiency levels in the two languages as they are demonstrated separately and in unison.
Preschool Language Assessment Scale (Pre-LAS 2000) (Duncan & DeAvila, 1998)	This assessment is designed to measure the developing language and preliteracy skills of preschool-age children to inform the placement of these young language learners into the most appropriate classroom settings. It is available in English and Spanish.
Language Assessment Scale—Oral (LAS—O) (Duncan & DeAvila, 1990)	This assessment measures the listening and speaking skills of students in grades 1 through 6 and 7 through 12. Like the Pre-LAS, it is available in English or Spanish and is useful in assessing primary language development or to identify students for placement in, and exit from, bilingual/ESL programs. The LAS—O contains an optional observation form that can be completed by another examiner to further support or triangulate findings used to determine whether a student is ready for redesignation.
The Bilingual Verbal Ability Tests Normative Update (BVAT-NU) (Muñoz-Sandoval, Cummins, Alvaredo, Ruef, & Schrank, 2005)	This assessment takes into consideration both the native and second language and comprises three subtests from the Woodcock-Johnson III Tests of Achievement (Woodcock, McGrew, & Mather, 2001) that have been translated into 18 languages (now including Hmong and Navajo). The BVAT scoring software generates a report that differentiates among the student's bilingual verbal ability, student's cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) skills, and relative language proficiency in languages assessed.
Language Assessment Scale—Reading/Writing (LAS—R/W) (Duncan & DeAvila, 1990)	This assessment measures reading and writing skills in English or Spanish L1 ability levels. It may be used to identify students for placement in, and exit from, bilingual or ESL programs. The test combines selected response and writing sample evaluations to assess vocabulary, fluency, reading comprehension, mechanics, and usage.

IDEA Proficiency Test (IPT) (Ballard & Tighe, 2004)	This assessment offers oral, reading, and writing versions available in Spanish and English. It is also designed to assess both social and academic language. Like other assessments of this type, the IPT may be used to measure primary language skills but is most often employed for the identification, placement, and (re)classification of CLD students who are acquiring English in appropriate classroom contexts.
Woodcock-Muñoz Language Survey Revised (WMLS-R) (Woodcock, Muñoz-Sandoval, Ruef, & Alvaredo, 2005)	This assessment is another popular measure of Spanish and English that comes with a computerized scoring program. This scoring program generates a narrative that describes the CALP in English or Spanish, or the relative proficiency between languages if both versions of the test are administered.
Receptive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test (ROWPVT) (Brownell, 2000b) and its companion, the Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test (EOWPVT) (Brownell, 2000)	These assessments, originally developed for English speakers, have been translated into Spanish and are normed on bilingual students in the United States. These assessments credit correct responses in either language (conceptual scoring) in addition to rating relative proficiency in Spanish and English.
Stanford English Language Proficiency 2 (SELP2) assessment (Harcourt Assessment, 2003)	This assessment measures the English listening, reading, writing, and speaking skills of K–12 students. Now with four forms, SELP 2 can be used at the beginning of the school year to establish a baseline and then administered periodically to obtain multiple data points to evaluate progress. SELP 2 assesses student language proficiency and mastery of skills included in the CCSS and WIDA standards and is a predictor of how well students will perform on high-stakes state assessments. If employed during the school year, results can be used to help prepare students in advance of the standardized testing required by states.

Formal standardized attempts to measure the *overall* language proficiency of emergent bilinguals often involve administering essentially monolingual tests in two or more languages (e.g., the native language and English). Although this approach to testing CLD students does provide information about separate language skills, these assessments may not tell us much about the larger body of language competencies a student may draw upon for learning. Emergent bilinguals develop language competencies that often reflect the intertwining of linguistic features from the native language and English (García, Ibarra Johnson, & Seltzer, 2017).

Some formal language assessments have been developed to permit CLD students to demonstrate more holistic language knowledge and competency. Generally, this means that students are assessed in one language and are either simultaneously or sequentially prompted to provide missing or incorrect information in the alternate language. These approaches are based largely on Cummins's (1984, 1996) conceptualization of a bilingual person's *common underlying proficiency* (CUP). They operate on the theory that a CLD student's structural and communicative language knowledge is best demonstrated through assessment in contexts in which both languages are accessed, even though one language may be dominant.

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These assessments are standardized and have been normed using performances of similar bilingual students under similar conditions. Such norming better accounts for relevant linguistic and cultural factors. Two assessments of this kind are the Dos Amigos Verbal Language Scale and the Bilingual Verbal Ability Tests Normative Update.

The Dos Amigos Verbal Language Scale (Critchlow, 1996) is easily administered and uses 85 pairs of opposites in Spanish and English to measure conceptual linguistic knowledge. Qualitative results provide information about relative proficiency in each language. The provision for qualitative interpretation also facilitates a more holistic picture of proficiency levels in the two languages as they are demonstrated separately and in unison. This is significant because bilingual students often exhibit a home and community vocabulary in the primary language that is broader than the academic vocabulary they can demonstrate in English. Therefore, assessing language proficiency in one language alone can provide misleading information about the student's overall vocabulary knowledge.

Analyzing response differences and performance can also demonstrate whether the student is accessing L1 knowledge to help him or her process concepts in L2. For instance, a student may correctly respond that "*blanco"* is the opposite of "*negro.*" However, the same student may

respond to the English prompt that the opposite of "*black"* is "*brown.*" Such responses indicate that the student can use words to make the targeted conceptual connection in the L1 but does not yet grasp L2 words in ways that demonstrate a similar level of processing.

The Bilingual Verbal Ability Tests Normative Update (BVAT-NU) (Muñoz-Sandoval, Cummins, Alvaredo, Ruef, & Schrank, 2005) also takes into consideration both the native and second language and comprises three subtests from the Woodcock-Johnson III Tests of Achievement (Woodcock, McGrew, & Mather, 2001) that have been translated into eighteen languages (now including Hmong and Navajo). The BVAT scoring software generates a report that differentiates among the student's bilingual verbal ability, *cognitive academic language proficiency* (CALP) skills, and relative language proficiency in languages assessed.

For some CLD students who are acquiring a second language or are using their first language less, there may be a significant difference between their expressive and receptive skills. This disparity may not show up on assessments that measure all language competencies with tasks requiring a verbal response. Being aware of this disparity can help the classroom teacher plan lessons that are comprehensible at higher levels and still provide necessary supports and modifications for verbal participation.

5

Examples of assessments developed to separate the receptive and expressive domains are the Receptive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test (ROWPVT) (Brownell, 2000b) and its companion, the Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test (EOWPVT) (Brownell, 2000a). These assessments, originally developed for English speakers, have been translated into Spanish and are normed on bilingual students in the United States. Like the BVAT, these assessments credit correct responses in either language (conceptual scoring) in addition to rating relative proficiency in Spanish and English. More recent research suggests that total vocabulary (count of all correct words) may be an even more reliable measure of vocabulary growth in bilinguals than conceptual scores (Core, Hoff, Rumiche, & Señor, 2013). Situational priming and inhibition also impact bilingual students' ability to access words in L1 or L2 during naming tasks (Anaya, Peña, & Bedore, 2018). Because of the great variance in home language lexicons and experiences, caution is recommended in the interpretation of any formal measures of vocabulary.

Educators often are at a loss when determining the level of language proficiency of their English learners. Having knowledge of tests available and the potential of each to provide the necessary information for decision making related to program placement, services, and instruction is critical.

Teaching Tips:

- Use the findings of standardized tests to make decisions about necessary adaptations to the curriculum.
- Configure groups based on students' L1 and L2 proficiency to maximize oral language development.
- Use standardized test scores to set the baseline and create checklists to monitor student progress (more on this in the upcoming discussion of informal assessments).
- Create materials aligned with content standards that will be accessible to the student based on language proficiency.

State-Developed or State-Adopted Variations

In response to state and federal accountability requirements, as well as historic inconsistency in state testing practices, there is a growing trend among states to develop (or subcontract the development of) their own assessments for English learners. For instance, Kansas uses one such tool called the Kansas English Language Proficiency Assessment 2 (KELPA2). KELPA2 assessments are divided into four parts corresponding with the four domains of the English Language Proficiency Standards: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. KELPA2 assessments are fully computer-based for students in 2nd grade and beyond. K–1 learners take a mostly computer-based exam, while also completing a small number of writing items using paper and pencil. KELPA2 assessments are implemented every spring, along with regular Kansas Assessment Program (KAP) summative assessments in English language arts and math.

Similarly, Texas uses the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS). TELPAS fulfills federal requirements for assessing the English language proficiency of K–12 English learners in the four language domains: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. TELPAS assesses students in alignment with the Texas English Language Proficiency Standards, which are part of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) curriculum.

Many states around the nation alternatively have joined a consortium. As a consortium member, the state has access to tools its schools can use to assess CLD students' language proficiency. The assessment results then are used to determine the extent of language services needed by each

student.

For example, members of the World-class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) consortium use ACCESS for ELLs 2.0. This is a secure, large-scale English language proficiency assessment administered to K–12 students who have been identified as English learners. Developed by WIDA, ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 is aligned with the WIDA English Language Development Standards and assesses each of the four language domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. It is given annually to monitor students' progress in acquiring academic English. ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 is only available to school districts within the states that are part of the WIDA consortium. This assessment serves multiple purposes for the states administering the test. First, it helps students and families understand learners' current levels of English language proficiency along the developmental continuum. Second, it serves as a measure for determining whether students are prepared to exit English language support programs. Third, it provides districts with information that helps them evaluate the effectiveness of their ESL/bilingual programs.

The ELPA 21 assessment is another large scale utilized by a group of consortia member states that designed and developed an assessment system for English learners. The system is based on English language proficiency standards and addresses the language demands needed for students to reach college and career readiness. This exam assesses students' English abilities in speaking, listening, reading, and writing and scores them according to different levels. It is administered at the beginning of the school year or at the time of a student's arrival at a new school system. The summative assessment is taken annually at the end of the school year by students who were designated as English learners. The results of the summative assessment are used to monitor students' progress in English language acquisition.

In short, different states use different English language proficiency assessments to identify, monitor, and exit their students from language services. States decide which assessment they will use, based on their own state-specific educational policies. All of these assessments are intended to provide insights into students' language levels and abilities across the four domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Interpreting Results

Formal standardized assessments of second language proficiency generally measure a CLD student's competency with targeted skills such as reading, writing, speaking, or listening. The results are reasonably assumed to represent new learning and are used to compare individual or

group growth toward the standard on which it is based. In best practice, second language proficiency assessments should rarely be interpreted to infer anything about a student's innate linguistic or cognitive abilities.

Unfortunately, the results of language proficiency assessments are not always interpreted cautiously, especially when the assessment is administered in the student's primary language. Although there are certainly reasons to gather information about an English learner's primary language, relying on formal assessments or inappropriate testing procedures can lead to erroneous findings, inaccurate assumptions, and the potentially harmful placement of the student.

7

For example, it is not uncommon for students who were raised in bilingual U.S. communities to perform poorly on language proficiency assessments (for languages other than English) that were developed and normed in countries outside the United States. This is especially true if these students received classroom instruction only in English. When combined with apparent evidence of a student's limited English proficiency, these results are sometimes misinterpreted to indicate innate language or learning problems.

In reality, the results more often reflect cross-cultural discontinuities or differing expectations and norms across educational systems. Educators should carefully examine the normative basis of such assessments to ensure that they are valid for the population (and specific backgrounds) of students served. By giving serious consideration to the appropriateness of assessments and by being knowledgeable about language acquisition variables, we help ensure that results actually lead to unbiased instructional decisions and practices.

It is also important to remember that not all standardized assessments of language proficiency are created equal. Some may be designed with vocabulary or constructs seemingly unrelated to classroom goals and objectives. Other problematic content or stimuli include culturally or experientially narrow items (e.g., picture prompts of men panning for gold), which inevitably measure content-area knowledge as well as language.

Effective teachers of CLD students are concerned as well with the currency of language proficiency assessments. They check to ensure that the pictures and references in an assessment are relevant to modern-day life. For example, classroom teachers often report that many students misidentify pictures of televisions and typewriters as computers. Others do not recognize pictures of corded phones or bar soap. Similarly, CLD students often arrive with varied experiences and provide

alternate answers that make sense to them (and indeed demonstrate the targeted skills), only to have these answers marked incorrect on the assessment.

Examiners should scrutinize both the assessment and the student's performance. One can ask the student to explain answers different than those cited as "correct." Atypical responses may reflect either a culturally different interpretation of the prompt or a correct (albeit nontraditional) application of the targeted skills and understandings. For this reason, it is critical to be aware not only of what each assessment actually measures, but also the student skills the assessment might potentially fail to take into account.

When students take assessments, teachers can ask proctors to add anecdotal notes on students' performance behavior during implementation of the test. These notes on the academic and linguistic behaviors exhibited by a student during the assessment can provide valuable insights for the teacher. The teacher can consider both noted challenges and indications of the student's successful strategy use when planning instructional interventions and daily lessons.

Assessment Freeze Frame 5.2

> Although there are certainly reasons to gather information about an English learner's primary language, relying on formal assessments or inappropriate testing procedures can lead to erroneous findings, inaccurate assumptions, and the potentially harmful placement of the student.

As this chapter discusses, language can be defined in so many ways and along so many continua that there is no one, agreed-upon set of skills that truly reflects this amazing human gift. Therefore, it is not uncommon to find that different language assessment developers have chosen radically different tasks to measure the same skill (for example, language comprehension). This, along with the fact that many language assessment developers customize their assessments to align with individual state standards, reminds us that we must always critically analyze and reflect on assessment results. The best way to know what our language proficiency assessments are—*and are not*—telling us, as well as how reliably they inform us about CLD student learning, is to consistently align their findings with those of other assessments of language performance and achievement.

8

Informal Assessment of Language Proficiency

Language is a rich and complex system of sounds, words, sentences, nuances, and gestures that is, by its very nature, reciprocal and spontaneous. Other than for distinct purposes, such as formal speeches, language is incredibly interactive and socially dynamic. For example, it is quite natural for teachers to adapt their style and pace or stop for clarification when reading to students who appear confused or inattentive. These subtleties, which make replicating language with technology so difficult, also hamper our use of formal assessments to measure a student's grasp of a language. Any time we seek to assess language, we must understand not only what our tests can tell us but also what they *cannot*. In this section, we discuss a variety of informal assessment techniques for developing a clearer picture of a CLD student's language profile and proficiency level.

The value of informal assessment data frequently depends on the types and numbers of settings in which we observe the student's use of language—as well as the perspectives through which we interpret that language usage. For example, because language can be so situation-specific, it is unwise to assume that a single sample of CLD students' language is fully representative of their broader linguistic abilities. What CLD students may not be able to properly express in one language, manner of speaking, or situation, they may be perfectly capable of expressing in another.

Reflect back to the three dimensions of language we discussed earlier: form, content, and use. It is through the informal assessment of language proficiency that we can gauge more clearly how our students are progressing in their acquisition of English and in their understanding of these dimensions of language. We also can look for language performances that do not match our contextual expectations but might be quite appropriate from the perspective of a different cultural norm.

For instance, some children may feel that to answer questions with obvious answers is disrespectful, or they may avoid eye contact as a sign of respect, despite the teacher's insistence to "look at me when I'm talking to you." Other children may call out agreement or commentary as the teacher speaks. We all attend to different cultural norms that affect our communication style in various settings. How might we be judged if, while in church, we respond to the sermon in a manner appropriate for a football game? How many of us find "table talk" quite different at our own

house than it is at the homes of our in-laws or neighbors?

Just as it takes any child time to learn the subtleties of when and what to say where, CLD students will, if not demeaned for their culture's rules, learn additional cultural norms for effectively communicating with multiple groups in multiple settings. Teacher actions that demonstrate concern for the affective side of learning, and especially language learning, are key to this process. Arnold (2009) defines affect as the area of feelings, emotions, attitudes, moods, and beliefs that influence students' behavior. Students who feel supported and encouraged to take risks in their new language and communicative interactions will progress more quickly and easily along the path toward more proficient language use. As we explore informal ways of assessing language proficiency, consider how teachers can use such approaches to gather information—while simultaneously providing students with affirmation and assurances of their capacities, progress, and potential.

Assessment Freeze Frame 5.3

> Any time we seek to assess language, we must understand not only what our tests can tell us but also what they *cannot*.

9

Home Language Surveys

Linh's kindergarten teacher referred her to the student intervention team because she was "still not speaking English in class." The teacher felt something was very wrong because other teachers noted that Linh's brother began speaking with peers "nearly right away" and their father was reportedly able to convey basic information in English to staff members. The teacher was concerned that Linh might be developmentally delayed.

In reviewing the home language survey, the intervention team quickly noted that, although the father had some English proficiency, Vietnamese was reported as the only language spoken in the home. This was logical because Linh's mother did not speak English at all. Despite the initial impressions of the teacher, the team concluded that Linh probably was not developmentally delayed, but rather had had very limited exposure to English prior to her first preschool year.

The survey used in this school also asked about the dominant language of the child at home (in this

The survey used in this school also asked about the dominant language of the child at home (in this case, Vietnamese) but did not ask for any information about the child's perceived proficiency with that language. To meet Linh's needs effectively and help her achieve in school, it was decided that the team needed more information about her first language proficiency and use.

In this scenario, a misunderstanding about language acquisition processes almost resulted in an inappropriate assessment of the student's actual communicative competence. *Home language surveys*, such as the one depicted in **Figure 5.3**, are one of the most common ways that schools and districts gather initial information about the language(s) used in a student's home. These assessments of language proficiency help teachers understand more about students' level of exposure to English and their linguistic foundations in the primary language.

Figure 5.3

Home Language Survey

The home language survey is given as soon as a student from a diverse language or dialect background enrolls in the school district. Besides the date and the student's name, additional information is gathered: country of origin, whether the student has been in a school in a language other than English, how long and in what language was the schooling, the student's first language, etc. The home language survey is to be kept in the student's cumulative file to inform all education personnel.

Date _____ School _____ Grade _____ Student's Name _____

Parent or Guardian's Name _____

1. What is the student's country of origin? _____
2. What language did your child learn when first beginning to talk? _____
3. What language does your child most frequently use at home? _____
4. What language do you most frequently speak to your child? _____
5. What language does the primary caregiver speak to your child? _____
6. What is the language most frequently spoken at home? _____

7. Has the student had academic instruction in a language other than English? Yes ❑ No ❑ How long? _____ Language? _____

8. Please describe the language understood by your child. (Check only one.) _____

   a. ❑ Understands only the home language and no English.

   b. ❑ Understand mostly the home language and some English. (and Spanish)

   c. ❑ Understands the home language and English equally.

   d. ❑ Understands mostly English and some of the home language.

   e. ❑ Understands only English.

9. If available, in what language would you prefer to receive communication from the school? _____

Source: Collier, C. (2015). *Separating difference from disability workbook*. Ferndale, WA: CrossCultural Developmental Education Services. Page 36. Reprinted with permission.

Home language surveys are included as informal assessments in this text because districts have considerable flexibility in the way they create and administer the survey. Federal mandates only ask that some sort of screener be used to determine which students need to be formally assessed for language proficiency. Home language surveys fulfill this purpose. Districts also administer home language surveys in informal ways. Parents frequently complete them at a welcome center or other location as part of the registration process.

Although home language surveys can serve a variety of additional purposes, they are generally the first and broadest step toward identifying students who may qualify for additional language services. When the home language survey indicates a primary language other than English is spoken in the home, the student is often referred. Postreferral assessments help determine whether a student is proficient enough in English to participate fully in classrooms where instruction is delivered only in English.

Whether home language surveys are simple or complex, school personnel who review them should bear in mind that some parents will lack the literacy skills (in either English or the first language, or both) to complete these forms without additional support. Other parents might misinterpret the meaning or intention of survey questions due to language dialects or translation quality. Some

meaning or intention of survey questions due to language dialects or translation quality. Some parents, unsure of the degree of trust they should place in school officials and systems, will require additional information about the process and its possible outcomes for their child before they will feel comfortable completing the survey.

Examiner Tips:

- Explain the survey's purpose.
- Ensure privacy of information.
- Explain how the results of the survey will be used.
- Provide assistance to parents in completing the survey.
- Verify the parents' interpretation of provided information during translator-assisted conferences. This effort provides valuable opportunities as you establish lines of communication with parents or guardians and seek additional information about the funds of knowledge students bring to class.

With conscientious use and interpretation, assessments such as the following similarly can be used in informal ways to elicit key information about primary language development.

- Bilingual Language Proficiency Questionnaire (Mattes & Santiago, 1985; Mattes & Nguyen, 1996)
- Communication and Play Screening Instruments (Kayser, 2008)
- Adapted, parent-friendly version of the Student Oral Language Observational Matrix (SOLOM) (California Department of Education, n.d.[a]) (see **Figure 5.4** for adapted version in English and Appendix B for a Spanish translation)

Figure 5.4

Parent-Friendly Student Oral Language Observation Matrix (SOLOM)

Parent/Teacher Language Observation

(Adapted from the Student Oral Language Observation Matrix)

Student's Name:				**Grade:**
Home Language(s):			**Completed By (signature):**	
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**
A. Comprehension	Doesn't appear to understand any conversation.	Has difficulty following everyday social conversation, even when words are spoken slowly and repeated.	Understands most of what is said at slower-than-normal speed with repetitions.	Understan nearly ever at normal s although occasiona repetition r necessary
B. Fluency	Speech is so limited that conversation is virtually impossible.	Student attempts to speak but has periods of silence due to limitations.	Speech in everyday conversation is frequently disrupted by the student's search for words.	Speech in everyday conversati generally f with occas lapses whi student se for the cor manner of expressior
C. Vocabulary	Vocabulary is so limited that conversation is virtually impossible.	Difficult to understand because of limited vocabulary and misuse words.	Student frequently uses wrong words: conversation somewhat limited because of inadequate vocabulary.	Occasiona of inappro terms and/ rephrasing ideas beca limited vocabulary
D. Pronunciation	Pronunciation problems so	Difficult to understand	Concentration required of	Always inte (understan

Pronunciation	problems so severe that speech is virtually unintelligible.	understand because of pronunciation problems; must frequently repeat in order to be understood.	required of listener; occasional misunderstandings caused by pronunciation problems.	(understan although s sounds ma error.
E. Grammar	Errors in grammar and word order are so severe that speech is virtually unintelligible.	Difficult to understand because of errors in grammar and word order. Rephrases or limits speech to basic patterns.	Frequent errors in grammar and word order. Sometimes hard to understand meaning.	Occasiona errors in grammar c order. Doe interfere w meaning.

Source: Adapted SOLOM, Natasha Reyes, Wichita, KS. Reprinted by permission.

Information gathered with these tools can allay the teacher's concerns about students who exhibit longer-than-expected silent periods. A *silent period* is part of the preproduction stage of the second language acquisition process (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). During this period, CLD students may communicate in only nonverbal ways as they primarily listen to the new language and try to understand its patterns and rules before attempting to produce in that language.

3

When classroom teachers are aware of criteria incorporated on such assessment measures, they can better attend to language development throughout the instructional day. For example, a teacher who is familiar with the school district's language acquisition rubric is often much more aware of the need to develop descriptive vocabulary among CLD students. This teacher might then purposefully elicit words such as *crunchy, gooey, delicious, crisp,* or *sweet* during nonacademic periods of the day, such as snack time.

Home Visit Interviews

During a , teachers asked a few more detailed questions about Linh's use of language in the home. The team was able to observe Linh's interactions with her family, who shared the same cultural and linguistic knowledge base. Because these assessments were conducted in Linh's language of comfort, they were more likely to yield genuine information about her true linguistic abilities.

The responses the teachers received and the language performance they observed indicated that Linh actually began speaking at an early age. She was able to speak in complete sentences, and she used language effectively to tell her parents about her day at school. These findings reassured the team that Linh possessed a strong language base rather than a possible developmental delay.

The home visit also provided additional information that her teacher could use to enhance the home–school connection. Aided by a translator, the teacher encouraged the parents to talk about and build on school topics they could glean from translated newsletters, notes, and Linh herself. The parents were reassured that doing so in the home language would facilitate Linh's classroom learning and confidence and enhance her ability to transfer her primary language skills to the new language.

The next month, during a class discussion on weather, Linh raised her hand excitedly to share, "My dad say Vietnam so much rain."

"Yes," the teacher replied, "Some places like Vietnam get much more rain than we do."

Along with other class members, Linh walked over to the globe to find Vietnam. Together, they talked about the weather in Vietnam, Mexico, Israel, and even Chicago, where Jason said his grandmother calls wind "the hawk." It was amazing how a few simple strategies for helping Linh's parents enrich her learning had such an impact on the learning experiences of others.

Observational data gathered through home visits can greatly enrich and validate findings from other types of language proficiency measures or surveys. Observing language use in context allows educators to see how students actually use the relatively decontextualized skills measured by

formal tests. Seeking this kind of additional data was essential in Linh's case, as teachers felt they simply did not have enough information to make appropriate decisions about her instruction based solely on the home language survey. The team followed up the standard survey with a home visit interview, knowing that a genuine developmental delay or learning concern would be evident in Linh's home environment as well.

A parent or caregiver's observations of a child's language use in the home and with family can greatly inform the assessment process. Ideally, teachers will have the opportunity to meet with parents or caregivers at home. Parents and students often are more comfortable in their home environment, and such opportunities allow educators to observe student behavior in a setting that is familiar and nonthreatening. Translators involved in this process should know the teacher's agenda for the meeting and should be trained (in both linguistic and cultural competencies) to provide parents/caregivers and the teacher a reliable interpretation of the messages exchanged.

4

A guide or prepared list of questions may be helpful, but the astute interviewer also invites parents to "tell me more" or to "think of a time when" the student demonstrated the skill being discussed. Checklists of communication functions (i.e., how the student uses language in context) are also useful for obtaining information about a student's overall communication proficiencies. Such checklists allow teachers to note the child's use of L2 at school and then probe parental perceptions about how the child uses language in the home or community. When a teacher has more clues about a student's particular language strengths and preferences, he or she can more appropriately accommodate that student's learning and L2 acquisition needs.

Accommodative Assessment Practices 5.1

Ms. Kole used a simple checklist of communication functions (see **Figure 5.5** and the related appendix resource) to quickly note language skills she had observed with CLD students in various classroom contexts. Although Jean, a CLD student, was demonstrating several important skills, such as describing experiences and expressing imagination, he struggled to follow sequential

directions in class. Ms. Kole doubted that language was a factor because Jean understood each step perfectly when instructions were broken down into smaller units. Therefore, she decided to explore other issues that might be involved.

Figure 5.5

Communication Functions Checklist

Please indicate whether the following communicative behaviors are:

Observed (+)
Reported (R)
Not Observed (−)

Student Name: _____

	L1	L2
1. Student comments on actions of self or others.		
2. Student initiates conversations.		
3. Student maintains a topic in conversation.		
4. Student follows multipart directions.		
5. Student uses language to request (action/object, assistance, information, clarification, etc.).		
6. Student uses language to tell (needs, feelings, thoughts, answers to questions).		
7. Student describes experiences (retells events).		
8. Student predicts outcomes or describes solutions.		
9. Student expresses and supports opinions.		
10. Student uses language to express imaginative and creative thinking.		

During conference week, Ms. Kole met first with the French interpreter to discuss Jean's progress

and her concerns before they met with Jean and his mother in the home. Ms. Kole also discussed the communication inventory with the interpreter so they were both aware of particular language skills to ask about in the home language setting.

Jean's mother was expecting them and left her supper to simmer while visiting with the guests from school—she was so pleased to meet them! After exchanging greetings with the teacher, Jean's mother turned to her son with several comments, and he headed over to the open kitchen. Ms. Kole noticed the interpreter watching him as she and Jean's mother resumed the conference. After a minute or two, Ms. Kole cleared her throat ever so slightly to regain the translator's attention. The translator smiled and told the teacher that Jean had just carried out every one of the four things his mother told him to do in the kitchen, precisely as directed.

Momentarily putting the agenda aside, Ms. Kole commented on the interpreter's observation.

> **Ms. Kole:** Some children have trouble following directions even when they try. Does Jean usually follow directions this well?
>
> **Mom:** Oh, yes. Back in Port-au-Prince, I could send him to my sister's apartment or to the market, and he always remembered all the things I said to do and get. He's a good boy.
>
> **Ms. Kole:** That's great! I always forget things on my grocery list. How do you remember everything, Jean?
>
> **Jean:** Sometimes my mother sings while she's doing her chores. So when she tells me lots of things to do, I make a song in my head, too. Hey, that rhymes!

Ms. Kole gained many valuable insights about how to work more effectively with Jean, such as using music and rhyme in the classroom as mnemonic devices.

Classroom teachers should always keep in mind that CLD student performance may be affected by variables other than language. Students of all cultures and linguistic backgrounds can benefit from the careful differentiation of instruction to meet their particular needs.

5

Classroom-Based Measures

Classroom-based measures of language proficiency provide the flexibility that teachers need to observe, document, and monitor students' use of language skills in low-risk, low-stress situations.

Checklists

In addition to developing social language—or *basic interpersonal communication skills* (BICS)—CLD students must acquire the CALP necessary for classroom success. These language skills include but are not limited to inquiring, classifying, describing, comparing, contrasting, explaining, analyzing, inferring, supporting one's opinions, persuading, synthesizing, and evaluating. It is often easier and more authentic for a teacher to evaluate how students demonstrate language skills with activities and materials he or she already uses than it is to create unrelated or isolated assessments to measure the skills. The checklist depicted in **Figure 5.6** provides examples of skills related to BICS and CALP development (see also the related appendix resource). Using a checklist such as this, teachers can observe a student in the course of daily instruction and update the checklist accordingly.

Figure 5.6

BICS and CALP Checklist

Basic Interpersonal Communication Skill (BICS)		
L1	**L2**	**Listening**
❍	❍	Understands school/classroom routines
❍	❍	Responds, with little hesitation, when asked to perform a nonverbal task
❍	❍	Follows oral directions at the end of lesson (with familiarity and modeling)
❍	❍	Listens to peers when process is provided
❍	❍	Becomes distracted when lesson is not differentiated
❍	❍	Distinguishes sameness or difference between English sounds

L1	**L2**	**Speaking**
❍	❍	Is comfortable with groups speaking English
❍	❍	Communicates with peers in social settings
❍	❍	Responds to questions in class when the question is context embedded or the teacher provides scaffolding
❍	❍	Is able to retell a pictured, cued, or scaffolded story
❍	❍	Can describe the topic of the lesson using limited vocabulary
❍	❍	Struggles with concept retelling when topic is not contextualized
❍	❍	Withdraws when group discussions go beyond known vocabulary
❍	❍	Is eager to participate when language demands are supported
L1	**L2**	**Reading**
❍	❍	Recognizes common language of school
❍	❍	Recognizes environmental print (e.g., signs, logos, McDonald's)
❍	❍	Can match or read basic sight words
❍	❍	Reads best when material is contextualized
❍	❍	Demonstrates limited use of reading strategies
❍	❍	Volunteers to read when material is known
L1	**L2**	**Writing**
❍	❍	Writes personal information (e.g., name, address, phone number)
❍	❍	Writes with contextual and/or instructional scaffolding

❍	❍	Writes with some spelling errors
❍	❍	Writes with many spelling errors
❍	❍	Writes with moderate to high levels of syntax errors
Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP)		
L1	**L2**	**Listening**
❍	❍	Is able to carry out academic tasks without language support
❍	❍	Understands vocabulary in different content areas (e.g., *sum* in math vs. *some* in science)
❍	❍	Understands process/sequence across content areas
❍	❍	Uses selective attention when taking notes
❍	❍	Understands teacher idioms and humor
❍	❍	Understands English language functions
❍	❍	Comprehends teacher lecture, movies, and audiovisual presentations
L1	**L2**	**Speaking**
❍	❍	Asks/answers specific questions about topic of discussion
❍	❍	Uses temporal concepts (e.g., first, next, after) appropriately
❍	❍	Recognizes the need for, and seeks, clarification of academic tasks or discussion
❍	❍	Expresses rationale for opinion
❍	❍	Poses thoughtful questions
❍	❍	Actively participates in class activities and discussions
❍	❍	Volunteers to answer subject-matter questions of varying difficulty

L1	**L2**	**Reading**
❍	❍	Demonstrates knowledge and application of sound–symbol association
❍	❍	Demonstrates phonemic awareness skills such as sound blending, elision, and rhyming
❍	❍	Regards print with appropriate spatial skills and orientation (e.g., left to right, top to bottom)
❍	❍	Interprets written words and text as the print representation of speech
❍	❍	Understands differential use of text components (e.g., table of contents, glossary)
❍	❍	Reads for information and understanding
❍	❍	Reads independently to gather information of interest
L1	**L2**	**Writing**
❍	❍	Performs written tasks at levels required by the curriculum
❍	❍	Uses complex sentences appropriate for grade level
❍	❍	Writes from dictation
❍	❍	Writes for audience and purpose
❍	❍	Understands purposes and application of writing conventions
❍	❍	Uses writing as a tool for personal means (e.g., correspondence, notation, journaling)
❍	❍	Writes compellingly or creatively (e.g., editorials, poetry, lyrics, stories)

Source: Based on B. Bernhard & B. Loera (1992). Checklist of language skills for use with limited English proficient students. *Word of Mouth Newsletter*, 4(1). San Antonio, TX: Lauren Newton.

Anecdotal Logs

Much can also be learned about the academic language proficiencies of students through *anecdotal logs*. These are important components of observational assessment. Although it is certainly easier to set aside distinct times and situations to observe specific students, those moments are unlikely to yield the quantity and richness of results one can achieve by also noting incidents that arise naturally during the school day. The possibilities for this sort of observation are unlimited, and the various systems creative teachers develop to record and manage such data never cease to amaze.

Voices *from the* Field 5.1

As a teacher I know that I cannot always rely on the assessments that are done two to three times per year. I have come to realize that I need a system in place where I can find out different abilities that my students possess. To do this, I have started doing lots of informal assessment, including taking anecdotal notes during the lesson. I usually keep a clipboard next to me with a chart with names of students on it and take quick notes regarding my students during the activity. I always go back to the notes at the end of the day as I am reviewing my students' work.

Cali Nossaman, Second Grade Teacher. Reprinted with permission.

9

Another type of anecdotal log calls for the teacher to write (either on computer or by hand) the class roster or targeted students' names on sheets of removable labels. These can also be positioned or transported on a clipboard. As interesting language behaviors occur—or do *not* occur (lack of expected behavior is also noteworthy)—the teacher jots the date and comment on that student's label. For example, "10/2, short sentences—small group" may allow the teacher to counter another individual's impression that "Lise doesn't talk." At the end of the day or week, these labels are moved to a page in the student's folder. This strategy (easily adapted for tablet technologies) builds a chronological and reproducible record of language acquisition in progress.

Matrices and Rubrics

Tools such as matrices and rubrics may be used with either naturally occurring language samples or those elicited through story retelling or other more standardized contexts. Preexisting video or audio can also be rated to demonstrate growth, or lack thereof, to the present day. Because pragmatics and context influence the student's response, the teacher should note how the sample was obtained. This information assists reviewers as they interpret the results and compare them with other samples of the student's language.

Because the teacher can make more accurate and revealing observations once the student is more familiar with the teacher and setting, language observation rubrics may not be as informative for initial placement decisions as they are for monitoring ongoing growth and readiness for reclassification. Teachers who gather observational data frequently find it is a powerful tool for measuring learning over time. This ability to aid ongoing instructional planning is a distinct advantage over most formal measures of language, and there are many ways in which teachers can adapt rubrics to gather the specific type of information they need.

Although some classroom teachers prefer to use multiple sheets to note behaviors on different dates, others like to plot skills observed over time (by date) on the same page. Figure 5.8 illustrates one way of recording ongoing observations. Teachers who plot skills over time may then color-code data by setting (playground, large group, individual) or register (academic, social, with peer, or with adult) for a more holistic view of the student's language acquisition progress.

Figure 5.8

Plotted Skills

Expressive Communication Rubric

Student Name Karina T.

Date(s) Completed: X above 9/22/05 X below 2/28/06

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Message effectiveness	Unable to understand intent/ meaning.	X Difficult to understand.	Able to understand most but not all of message. X	Message is easily understood.
Language structure	X Multiple errors with word order and grammar.	Noticeable errors but student able to convey aspects of the message. X	Uses mostly correct structures with some errors.	Use of language structures is similar to that of a native speaker.

Vocabulary	Incorrect word choices and/or limited vocabulary hinder social and academic communication.	X Relies on a limited range of vocabulary to communicate. X	Vocabulary is not usually conspicuous but is rarely specific or elaborate.	Varied types of words, including idioms, are used with facility.
Pronunciation	Speech is often unintelligible.	Speech is understandable with careful listening and known context.	X Speech is generally understandable to familiar and unfamiliar listeners.	Speech pronunciation is similar to that of a native speaker. X

The teacher used the same rubric to plot Karina's expressive language skills observed in the fall and in the spring. From these results, the teacher can visually see the improvement in the student's message effectiveness, language structure, and pronunciation. Karina demonstrated the same level of skill with vocabulary at both points in time. The teacher then could use this information to focus efforts on promoting Karina's incorporation of vocabulary in her language production.

0

Observational matrices and rubrics such as the Student Written Language Observation Matrix (SWLOM) (California Department of Education, n.d.[b]) are also helpful tools for assessing writing to inform placement decisions and track student progress. Teachers using such approaches may wish to identify representative yet varied samples of writing, such as narratives, journals, blogs, and social network pages, for different audiences before rating skills according to the matrix. Inconsistencies in performance, such as improved voice or sentence variety in journal or letter writing—compared with essay attempts—can give teachers ideas for bridging strengths from one format to another (e.g., "Why don't you start by writing a letter to Joe about your book, and then we'll turn it into a book report"). These tools can also be adapted to rate a student's writing ability in his or her primary language. Personnel who are trained with the matrix and are both fluent and literate in the student's home language are able to most accurately interpret the data.

1

To monitor the overall growth in a student's language abilities, teachers can use tools such as an adapted or adopted continuum of skills. In the example presented in Figure 5.9 (and the related appendix resource), benchmarks of language acquisition in the areas of listening, speaking, reading, and writing are arranged in the order of the stages commonly associated with second language acquisition (i.e., preproduction, early production, speech emergence, intermediate fluency, and advanced fluency). Teachers who understand the skills involved in, and potentially elicited by, particular curricular activities find it much easier to assess after instruction whether students have demonstrated these skills, given appropriate opportunities and facilitation. Even in the absence of deliberate preplanning, it is often not difficult to note whether and when the hallmark skills of language development have been attained.

Figure 5.9

Continua for the Assessment of English Language Development

Student Name:			
	Preproduction	**Early Production**	**Speech Emergence**
Date			
Listening	• Cannot yet understand simple expressions or statements in English.	• Understands previously learned expressions. • Understands new vocabulary in context.	• Understands sentence-length speech. • Participates in conversation about simple information. • Understands a simple message. • Understands basic directions and instructions.
Date			
Speaking	• Is not yet able to make any statements	• Uses isolated words and learned phrases.	• Asks and answers simple questions

	in English.	• Uses vocabulary for classroom situations. • Expresses basic courtesies. • Asks very simple questions. • Makes statements using learned materials. • Asks and answers questions about basic needs.	about academic content. • Talks about familiar topics. • Responds to simple statements. • Expresses self in simple situations (e.g., ordering a meal, introducing oneself, asking directions).
Date			
Reading	• Is not yet able to read any words in English. • Is not yet able to identify the letters of the Roman alphabet. • Is not yet able to	• Reads common messages, phrases, and/or expressions. • Identifies the letters of the Roman alphabet. • Decodes most sounds of written English.	• Reads and comprehends main ideas and/or facts from simple materials.

	decode sounds of written English.	• Identifies learned words and phrases.	
Date			
Writing	• Is not yet able to write any words in English. • Is not yet able to write the letters of the Roman alphabet.	• Copies or transcribes familiar words or phrases. • Writes the letters from memory and/or dictation. • Writes simple expressions from memory. • Writes simple autobiographical information as well as some short phrases and simple lists. • Composes short sentences with guidance.	• Creates basic statements and questions. • Writes simple letters and messages. • Writes simple narratives.

Source: Wichita Public Schools, Wichita, Kansas. Reprinted by permission.

Assessment Freeze Frame 5.4

Assessment Freeze Frame 5.4

> Teachers who gather observational data frequently find it is a powerful tool for measuring learning over time.

Accommodative Assessment Practices 5.2

Below is the story Miguel made up to narrate an eight-part wordless cartoon after viewing several times on a classroom tablet. Mr. Mahon let each student determine his or her own readiness to retell their version of the story to him. He used a rubric to note key elements and transcribed the stories of those he most wanted to monitor. If words were too unclear or indecipherable in the audio recording, he simply left blank lines (blanks) as placeholders in the transcription. Miguel had made significant progress and was now quite a talker.

Transcription of Miguel's response:

"Yesterday Johnny was walking with the dog and he opened the door and the dog bark and Johnny put the dog inside his backpack.

Johnny came inside and his mom gave him cookie and he started, he hurt his stomach and he went to his room.

Johnny was in his room and he open his backpack and the dog came and he bite his sock, and he started to pull and his mom.

Johnny went to his room and he went to his bed and his mom came and the dog growled and his mom, is thinks it is Johnny's stomach.

Johnny, he growled his stomach and his mom got idea and his mom went, get out of his room.

Johnny get up, waked up and he put the dog right next to that window.

His friends came and the friends got the dog and get the mitten and his mom is get upsets.

His mom said, "Let's go to his bed," and he went to his bed and his friends, Johnny friends get away and the dog is so sad. And the mom give it medicine and he don't like it. The End."

How would you rate Miguel's skills using the rubric provided in Figure 5.8? What are his strengths? His needs? How might this information aid planning for Miguel's ongoing language development?

In Miguel's case, Mr. Mahon provided the following ratings for performance on this task:

- Message effectiveness: 2–3
- Language structure: 2–3
- Vocabulary: 3
- Pronunciation 4

Considering Miguel's performance on the narrative assessment, Mr. Mahon decided that his focus for the next month would be *language structure*, as this is the key area impacting *message effectiveness*. Mr. Mahon planned to address these skills first by ascertaining whether Miguel recognizes incomplete or vague sentences. This could easily be incorporated into a quick classwide game of "Which sentence sounds better, one or two?" If Miguel's listening skills reveal underlying grammar recognition, Mr. Mahon will further support him this month by offering "better" or "worse" sounding alternatives to phrases Miguel uses in classroom work. This will serve to affirm both Miguel's well-worded original sentences *and* his ability to select those that sound "better" to his competent ear. Mr. Mahon is confident that this is all Miguel would need to be then ready to self-rate and edit his own recorded stories.

4

Narrative Assessment

The conditions in which a student produces a sample of oral language can significantly affect how well this sample represents his or her actual language competence. Many linguists contrast a person's *language competence*—what she or he knows or can do—with *language performance*, how this knowledge is used in a particular circumstance (Byram, Holmes, & Savvides, 2013; Freeman & Freeman, 2014). The best measures of language proficiency elicit student performance that genuinely reflects language competence. In nearly all cases, this involves going beyond standardized assessments to demonstrate how students use language in authentic, real-life situations. Such opportunities easily found in the home with family and in unstructured social situations, can also exist at school when teachers create the right conditions. *Narrative assessments* often provide teachers with similar opportunities.

The ability to develop cohesive narratives (storytelling structures) is a critical component of second language acquisition for several reasons. Of primary interest to educators, this skill is essential for literacy development that goes beyond associating sounds with symbols/letters and decoding words out of context. An underlying knowledge of narrative forms and structures helps students better understand both written passages and orally presented material. This knowledge enables the reader to skim text for essential content, as well as comprehend narrative formats used to inform or persuade.

There are many ways to look at and sample narrative language. Assessing a CLD student's ability to produce narratives in the primary language can provide valuable insights into foundational knowledge and skills. As mentioned earlier, this information can greatly aid instructional planning, especially when paired with measures of narrative development in the second language.

Activities and techniques for eliciting student narratives can yield especially rich samples of language. However, the type and quality of sample a student produces depends on a variety of variables. Sometimes a teacher who is not fluent in the language or comfortable with the interaction patterns of the CLD student attempts to elicit conversation or narrative using prompts in the L1 that exhibit simplified grammar and vocabulary. Students perceive the teacher's limitations and naturally respond by simplifying their own vocabulary and sentence structures to better communicate with the teacher. Unfortunately, these efforts to facilitate communication may then be perceived as limitations of the student rather than the teacher. Such misperceptions can negatively affect a student's education because the teacher who believes a student's L1 skills are limited may fail to

draw on the student's prior linguistic knowledge as a learning asset.

Contradictory perceptions that students are simultaneously low in overall language yet possess "enough English" to achieve can result in decisions and practices that lead teachers away from the interventions most likely to resolve perceived learning concerns (i.e., L1 instruction, L2 accommodations). For this reason, it is important to note variables inherent to the situations in which we observe student language. Because we so often use language to assess language, it is always important to consider how the teacher's own language skills, speaking style, choice of wording, and subject of conversation may influence a student's response. The material a teacher uses to stimulate a response should also be familiar and meaningful to the student (Kayser, 2008).

5

Some narrative ratings also assess cohesion or *flow.* Student samples containing frequent word and grammar revisions (changes, false starts, self-corrections) are often perceived as evidence of poor vocabulary or language weakness. Because many English learners function bilingually, narrative reviewers should bear in mind insights from research on bilingual versus monolingual revision rates. Results of a study by Gámez and González (2017) compared the story structure complexity of bilingual students with those who were monolingual in English or Spanish. While using English or Spanish, the bilingual students used more revisions than others *as they increased narrative complexity*. Contrary to the perception of linguistic weakness or breakdown, these revisions were more positively correlated with word diversity and therefore considered evidence of deeper linguistic application.

Narrative tasks can yield terrific samples of language, or merely highlight the disconnect between prompts and purpose. Regardless of materials, educators will want to define the skill, behavior, or knowledge they hope to see evidence of in a sample. Which would you rate higher, the elaborate, well-developed story that is rife with grammar errors, or the incomplete retelling comprised of short, error-free statements? It depends on what you are assessing.

Awareness of the *what*, allows us to better recognize those capacities in real life. Teachers can be attuned to and inquire about evidence of narrative skills (e.g., telling jokes or stories, sharing anecdotes, describing movie plots) and proficiencies in other contexts. These insights prove especially valuable when assessing a relatively unschooled student.

Teaching Tips:

- Remember that asking students to "tell me a story" is often too vague, unless you provide the CLD student enough examples of the expected type of response.
- Provide samples or do a walk through (joint production) of an example story before expecting the student to generate his or her own original narrative from a prompt.
- Sources of inspiration for narratives can include wordless picture books, muted videos or computer stories, photos of class activities, and family photos.
- Topics might include popular movies, video game adventures, television shows (Spanish language novelas, for example, have clearer story lines than English language soap operas), current events (especially dramatic ones), or field trips.
- Wherever possible, document spontaneous narrative activities because they are often the best evidence of student skills. Significant events, such as playground fights, can elicit excellent (though unpleasant) examples of settings and characters with unique attention to sequence, antecedent, consequence, problem, solution, and alternate ending.

6

Accommodative Assessment Practices 5.3

The importance of student familiarity with material used to prompt their narrative responses was underscored during a professional development exercise. Teachers from the dominant culture were asked to write narratives about photographs of familiar (e.g., Statue of Liberty) and unfamiliar (e.g., India's Red Fort) cultural icons. The following was excerpted from a participating teacher's reflection journal about the exercise.

When we began this assignment, I thought it was an interesting way to involve students in a group writing activity and something I might like to use in class. It seemed easy to think of words to describe the Statue of Liberty because I was so familiar with it and visited it last summer. Our group had fun brainstorming words and then writing the paragraph. I thought everyone was very proud of

the symbolism the Statue of Liberty provides to the United States—a place of freedom, equality, beauty, diversity, opportunity and patriotism. I thought the paragraphs that each group wrote were extremely creative and enjoyable to hear.

As we looked at the second picture of the large stone building (India's Red Fort), I had a hard time thinking of descriptive words because I was unfamiliar with the building. Looking at it brought up no past experiences or memories, no feelings or ideas. I wondered why this picture had been chosen for the activity, as it seemed no one in the group knew what it was. I thought it was more difficult to compose the paragraph and did not feel the excitement to read it or hear others read as I had felt about the first picture. When we were told that the second picture was an important patriotic symbol for another country, I thought this must be how English language learner (ELL) students feel when given similar assignments related to U.S. culture.

During another group's discussion of this activity, one teacher mentioned that, although she and other African Americans understood and appreciated the symbolism, not all would associate the Statue of Liberty with the idea of unequivocal freedom that was expressed by others. This comment enabled other teachers to see that perceptions and cultural experiences influence a student's ability to respond authentically (or as predicted by a teacher) to a given prompt. This scenario reminds us as teachers to reflect on the student's familiarity with images, settings, plot lines, and other elements that can affect his or her performance and lead to invalid interpretations of assessment results.

Story Retelling Assessment

Story retelling assessment is another method of eliciting oral or written narratives from CLD students. Such tasks are a common component of language proficiency assessments. For some students, story retelling facilitates language production. The opportunity to hear a story first provides a model that students can use for retelling the story. These productions can reveal much about individual proficiency levels. Nonetheless, issues such as auditory memory, cultural norms, and task familiarity can confound the ability of other students to perform this essentially expressive task. Because factors other than targeted skills can have such a strong influence, some researchers argue against story retelling as a means of assessing linguistic ability (Gutierrez-Clellan & Quinn, 1993). This view is supported by the research of MacSwan, Rolstad, and Glass (2002), who found that 20% of the 38,887 Spanish-speaking students sampled for their study (students

who took the Spanish version of the IDEA Proficiency Test—Preschool [IPT-P]) did not respond at all when prompted to retell a story. The inordinately high percentage of students who did not respond on this subtest suggests that teachers or examiners should consider alternative methods of eliciting narratives for students who don't perform under structured conditions.

7

In practice, there may be a number of reasons why students do not respond at all or with the desired detail when asked to retell a story they have just heard. For instance, it can seem artificial and pragmatically inappropriate for the student to restate details of a story that the evaluator has just told. Clearly, the evaluator already knows it! This obstacle can often be overcome by asking the student to retell the story to another person or a puppet, or to record it for someone else.

A student may also have an unclear understanding of the expected response. Students often wonder, "Is it the topic (what it's about), the gist of what happened, or the whole thing that you want?" Being explicit about expectations and modeling an appropriate response help students better understand the task.

There may also be times when the conditions, story situation, or narrative format are culturally unfamiliar or uncomfortable for the student. Attending carefully to nonverbal signals from students and providing alternative conditions, stories with different plots, or stories with different narrative formats oftentimes can yield more desirable results. Teachers of CLD students who are reflective and creative are more likely to discover their students' true proficiencies and needs.

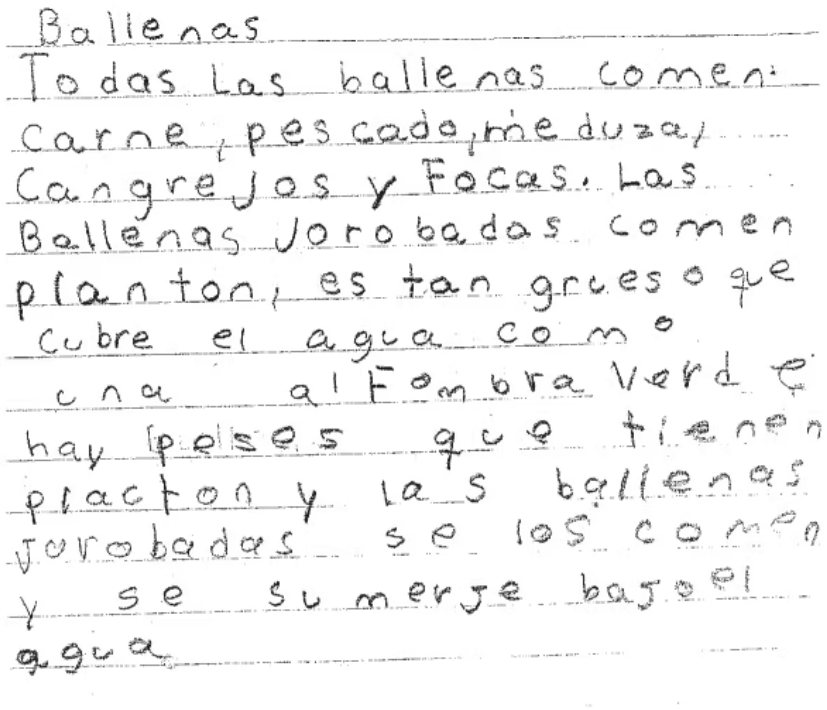
Native Language Writing Samples

When teachers assess academic language proficiency, they should keep in mind that, at times, it may be beneficial to allow students to use their native language to demonstrate content-area knowledge and skills. For example, Figure 5.10 illustrates one first-grade student's writing that was produced when the teacher allowed her to write in Spanish. Students in the class worked in small groups to produce books about whales (*ballenas*), and this student participated fully by writing her page in Spanish. The writing sample enabled the teacher to determine that the learner, a newcomer to the school in the earliest stages of English language acquisition, could construct a nonfiction text. Although the student was still developing the English skills needed to complete the task in her second language, she possessed the cognitive, academic, and linguistic skills to respond adeptly to the task in her native language.

Figure 5.10

Figure 5.10

Assessment Artifact: Primary Language CALP


Ballenas
Todas Las ballenas comen
Carne, pescado, meduza,
Cangrejos y Focas. Las
Ballenas Jorobadas comen
plankton, es tan grueso que
cubre el agua como
una alfombra Verde
hay peses que tienen
plankton y las ballenas
Jorobadas se los comen
y se sumerje bajo el
agua

English Translation:
Whales
All whales eat meat, fish, mussels, crabs, and seals. The humpback whales eat plankton, it is so thick that it covers the water like a green carpet. There are fish that have plankton and humpback whales eat them and submerge underwater.
In this writing sample, the student's rich vocabulary and understanding of the content concepts is apparent. She is able to use figurative language, as is evident from her inclusion of the simile comparing plankton with a green carpet. With this evidence of knowledge and learning, the teacher is able to confirm that the child's performance demonstrates attainment of the grade-level standard.

Source: Angela Sesti. Reprinted by permission.

Oral and Written Cloze Assessments

First-grade teacher Mrs. Wesley asked Ms. Buremen, the ESL teacher, for help teaching students to rhyme. She had tried everything to encourage them, but most just "didn't get it." Ms. Buremen was happy to plan her next whole-class lesson around this challenge and started by reading the rhyme-laden book *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie* (Numeroff, 1985). She read the first line of each rhyme and showed the corresponding picture. Then, paying very close attention to cadence, she read the second line and paused ever so slightly before saying the final rhyming word.

By the fourth rhyme, some of the students were calling out the rhyming words. Mrs. Moran nodded and continued without breaking the gentle flow of the poem's meter. To close the lesson, students used props to retell the story together as Ms. Buremen probed other language skills, such as sequence and vocabulary.

Mrs. Wesley took notes as Ms. Buremen started a new activity by laying four of the props from the story in a row. The broom, comb, bed, and chair provided a limited range of familiar responses from which the students could choose their rhymes.

Ms. Buremen: I like the way rhymes sound. Let's see if we can make some of our own. *Wake up, wake up you sleepy head, it's time now to get out of*.

Class: Bed!

Ms. Buremen: *If you're hungry, grab a pear, and then come sit down on a* _____.

Class: Chair!

Ms. Buremen: *But looking at this dirty room makes me want to use a* _____.

Class: Broom!

The students responded well to this oral cloze format. It provided semantic cues as well as auditory patterns and limited choices. By the end of the session, students were also having fun completing oral cloze rhymes *without* visible choices (e.g., *My little brother likes to eat. His favorite food to eat is* _____). Mrs. Wesley was pleased to learn that 90 percent of the spontaneous and sometimes silly responses produced actually rhymed. After listening to one another's choices, the students developed a word bank of possible answers (*meat, wheat, feet, seat, beet,* and so forth), some of which they were now generating without the scaffold of an oral cloze prompt. By using this approach, Mrs. Wesley determined which students did not demonstrate language proficiency levels sufficient to support this skill and which students were ready to recognize auditory patterns, given appropriate methods and supports.

9

Oral and written *cloze assessments*, in which words are deleted intentionally from the larger passage or text, can be used in a variety of ways to gather information about the student's progress in language acquisition and content-area learning. According to A. A. Ortiz (2004), the elements of most languages are remarkably redundant. As a result, we can comprehend messages that are distorted or missing a number of elements (e.g., articles, prepositions) by accessing our prior knowledge and applying our understanding of the system for that language. Knowledge of language patterns appears to correlate highly with one's overall proficiency in that language. Eventually, the language learner senses the absence of mandated elements.

There are multiple ways to construct oral and written cloze assessments. When a fixed ratio format is used, every *nth* (e.g., seventh) word is deleted throughout the passage. This is generally used to sample a student's more holistic knowledge of the language. However, teachers can choose to omit certain types of words, such as pronouns or past-tense verbs, to measure particular aspects of morphologic and syntactic development. Figure 5.11 is an example of a teacher-created, fixed-ratio cloze assessment in which every eighth word is deleted. Oral cloze assessments are especially powerful and highly adaptable ways to gather information about a student's emerging language acquisition and mastery of skills. They can help a student bridge simple recognition of language patterns with the emergence of new expressive skills. They also work well with story retelling to assess comprehension of auditory or text input.

Figure 5.11

Assessment Artifact: Written Cloze

Word Bank				
was	Zoo	Zebras	And	to
and	And	Little	Feet	elephants
they	with	Monkeys	To	

On a hot and sunny day, Letica _____ her mother decided to go to the _____. They brought

sunglasses, bottles of drinking water, _____ a camera. The first exhibit they saw _____ the home of two gray elephants. The _____ were enormous! They had huge ears, big _____, and very long trunks. Next they went _____ the building where the monkeys lived. Some _____ were busy eating and others were playing _____ old tires. Letica's favorite monkey was the _____ baby monkey. Letica and her mother continued _____ visit the many animals in the zoo. _____ took pictures of the lions, tigers, and _____. At the end of the trip, Letica _____ her mother were both very tired.

Teachers can follow up reading a story by asking students to "help me with the story." The teacher retells the story using an oral cloze format with regularly spaced pauses. At each pause, he or she gestures to students, asking them to fill in the missing word. Pacing is important for maintaining a natural flow and supporting student comprehension. Many CLD students initially unresponsive to story retelling tasks do well with this approach. When students provide appropriate answers, they demonstrate both comprehension and retention of the original material.

0

Listening Skills Assessments

Josue and Abram are working as a team to help their sophomore ESL class win a pizza party—but the students will win pizza only when everyone in the class successfully completes the task. The students are highly motivated as each person in each pair takes turns being the *giver* or *receiver* of directions. The partners are separated by a piece of cardboard so that neither can see what the other is doing.

Josue and Abram's first attempt to arrange five geometric shapes identically ended in surprise disaster. As they worked together, they felt sure they would win. However, they didn't realize until the final moment that failure to clarify had led to fundamental misunderstandings neither had recognized.

Their teacher, Mr. Sing, loved it when students discovered these moments for themselves. He had often wondered how frequently miscommunications occur in teaching and learning. Over the years, Mr. Sing had noted with concern how many CLD students did not actively listen or seek clarification regarding unfamiliar, ambiguous, or confusing material. He had begun to speculate on whether the students had become accustomed to simply "getting the gist," even though their language skills had developed sufficiently for deeper comprehension.

As a rule, Mr. Sing praised those students who asked for definitions of unfamiliar words as he

As a rule, Mr. Ong praised those students who asked for definitions of unfamiliar words as he taught, and he at times intentionally used nonsensical terms just to see who was listening. He encouraged all his students to ask clarifying questions because he believed it was the students' job to listen with their *mind* as well as *ears*—to listen to understand, recognize when they did not comprehend, and do something about it.

Josue and Abram had been watching other teams win and lose just as they had, but they were ready to try again. Josue considered the twenty shapes of varied form, size, and color. He needed to use only five. It seemed so easy.

Josue: Take the big yellow rectangle and put it in the middle.

Abram: The one that looks like a box or a French fry?

Josue: The rectangle. It's long from top to bottom and skinny side to side. Yeah, it looks kinda like a French fry.

Abram: Okay, I got it. Put it in the middle?

Josue: Yeah. (*Remembering another team's problem*) Make it vertical.

Abram: Vertical?

Josue: Vertical is up and down like a basketball pole.

Abram: Okay, I put the big, yellow rectangle up and down, vertical . . . in the middle.

Josue: Take the medium-size purple circle and put it on top.

Abram: On top of what? The paper?

Josue: Put the purple circle on top of the yellow rectangle.

Abram: On top . . . in the middle?

Josue: No, not laying on it . . . on top . . . *above* it, like a lollipop.

By the time all five pieces were in place, Abram and Josue had practiced academic listening and natural clarification skills, with repetition that was natural to the context of the activity. Mr. Sing assessed Abram as having grown so much in clarification ability that he planned to pair Abram next with Saul, who still did not recognize communication breakdowns. The students were becoming more aware of their own learning because they were motivated to earn the pizza party. Mr. Sing planned to later add a sphere, rhombus, cylinder, cube, and cone to their list of choices for this exercise.

1

Like Mr. Sing, many teachers find it easier to plan language assessment when they are able to identify the linguistic demands of their curriculum. Listening skills can be assessed in a variety of contexts, but observers should be acutely aware of environmental cues that can facilitate comprehension. When CLD students are unable to adequately comprehend the language of instruction, direction, or assessment, they more keenly attend to available physical, interpersonal, and nonverbal cues. Although this serves as a testament to their resourcefulness, it can also prompt the teacher to overestimate a student's L2 competencies and subsequently misinterpret his or her academic struggles. Conversely, when provided accommodative teaching, some students may, in fact, understand the material far better than their oral or written responses suggest.

Wherever possible, teachers should require CLD students to demonstrate listening skills in ways that do not involve spoken language (e.g., perform a task or make a physical signal of understanding). If, for example, a student's understanding of a story is evaluated solely on his or her ability to retell it or to answer questions (especially in L2), the teacher will likely find it nearly impossible to distinguish between the student's oral language skills and his or her comprehension. This is especially important when students are verbally limited in L2, but it also applies to the performance of seemingly fluent CLD students and native English speakers. Although students may be talkative, it can be difficult to determine whether these students really understood the targeted material. Therefore, careful evaluation of CLD students' listening skills includes tasks that do not

material. Therefore, careful evaluation of CLD students' listening skills includes tasks that do not combine performance and skills in other domains, as well as those that do.

The specifics of these tasks will, of course, vary greatly by grade level but may include:

1. Following oral instructions:

- Give students simple one-step directions such as, "Get out a crayon."
- Add modifiers such as, "Get out a *blue* crayon."
- Increase the number of steps such as, "Open your health book and turn to page 14."
- Gradually incorporate linguistic concepts (*of, unless, however, whether,* and so on) such as, "*Unless* you brought your lunch today, please line up at the door."
- Direct students to perform an experiment or create a product while checking to see how students respond to step-by-step instructions. This process better assesses listening skills than does providing detailed instructions all at once (the latter is often a memory issue rather than a language issue).
- Ask students to relay instructions to a peer in the L2. Alternatively, separate L2 *listening* skills from L2 *verbal* skills by having the student relay his or her understanding of L2 instructions to a peer in the L1.

2. Responding to questions:

- Students answer yes or no questions orally, with a head shake or nod, or thumbs up/ thumbs down.
- Provide the CLD student with a closed set of responses from which to orally or physically select an answer (e.g., pictures, words, or sentences from which to choose; questions phrased with modeled choices such as, "Who invented the light bulb, Edison or Einstein?").

3. Demonstrating curricular learning:

- Have students identify main characters, story sequence, problem/resolution, or content-area answers by pointing to or otherwise nonverbally selecting depictions of the appropriate response.
- Direct students to create a picture or product representing a core concept.
- Have students use graphic organizers to display their understanding of concepts or relationships using pictures or writing.

2

Among the more authentic ways to assess the listening skills of a CLD student are situations in which the student's ability to perform a task requires him or her to integrate listening skills and clarification strategies effectively. The scenario with Josue and Abram illustrated this type of activity. *Barrier games* are among the more broadly referred to *information gap activities* that compel students to draw on and value active listening skills that are not commonly addressed in traditional classrooms. Barrier games require one student to give another student directions to perform a task or to replicate a design, despite a physical barrier (e.g., open file folder, piece of cardboard) that prevents each student from seeing the other's referent. One of the most powerful features of barrier activities is that, after initial training and modeling, students can engage in skill building with very little input or interference from the teacher.

Oral Skills Assessments

Oral language acquisition is part of the human development process that occurs naturally through authentic communication. What we often tend to overlook is the fact that oral language is not so much a biological inheritance, but a cultural product. Children acquire increasing levels of language skills as they develop throughout their lives. With each linguistic interaction, they gather information and feedback regarding pronunciation, word order, word meanings, idiomatic expressions, and effective as well as ineffective ways of expressing needs, desires, and so forth *within a particular culture*. Learners process this information in largely subconscious ways. We later apply in our own speech language patterns and frames we've heard used by others. Oral language development is an ongoing process that requires repeated, meaningful practice.

Language is a vehicle or tool for communicating ideas, and this is true for both oral and written language production. Students' cultural backgrounds play an integral role as they become

increasingly active members of classroom activities and conversations. Culture influences how we interpret the language we hear and read, and it shapes how we express our own ideas (as well as the ideas themselves). English learners benefit from plentiful opportunities to interact with peers and share their unique perspectives about the curriculum and about themselves.

Formal oral skills assessment can provide a starting point for teachers as they gauge where their students' language skills are. However, from there such assessments should be considered as benchmarks to determine how students are progressing in response to daily instruction. Informal assessments of orals skills, on the other hand, can do much to inform teachers about how they might structure individual learning opportunities in the classroom.

Oral language samples often are most reflective of students' actual skills when they are gleaned in connection to daily lessons. Because oral production of language can be context reduced, where students have to form their oral language by relying heavily on their cognitive abilities, it is critical that we provide students with a context or structure to support their expansion of language. Personal connections to a recently discussed topic or an engaging book read with the class can provide a conceptual foundation for students as they harness their cognitive energy to produce oral language.

3

Free recall or a picture prompt can be used to elicit an oral language sample. The teacher simply asks the student to recall events from a story or events from their day (i.e., provide a context). Because the goal is for the student's response to reflect oral language abilities, it is critical that the recall or the retelling task occur as soon as possible after the event takes places or after the story is read, so the assessment does not end up becoming a test of memory.

The following illustrates a sample procedure:

1. After you have finished reading a picture book to students, choose a picture and select the device you will use to record the student's language.
2. Have the student share with you what is happening in the picture. You may prompt the student by saying, "Tell me a story about this picture" or "Using complete sentences, tell me three things you can share with me about this picture."
3. You may further prompt the child by saying, "Tell me more," or "What else can you say?" Remember to keep the prompts open ended, so the prompts do not lead students to the

answers or anticipated language.

4. Transcribe the student's entire response.

5. You may create a checklist or use an oral language rubric (see Figure 5.12) to gauge students' oral language skills.

Figure 5.12

Sample Oral Language Rubric

Oral Language Rubric

Name: _____

Grade: _____

Syntax: _____

4—Uses appropriate syntax of the English language with complex sentences. Grammar is used correctly. Appropriate use of tenses in the sentences.

3—Uses appropriate syntax of the English language with simple sentences. Grammar is used correctly. Switches the tenses as inserting them in sentences.

2—Uses correct English syntax for very simple sentences. Inappropriate use of grammar and tenses in sentences.

1—Uses very little correct syntax of the English language. No complete sentences used.

Vocabulary:

4—Uses many descriptive words and adjectives. Uses a variety of words to explain thought process.

3—Uses basic language consisting mostly of nouns and verbs with some use of descriptive words and adjectives.

2—Uses very simple, basic language and short phrases consisting mostly of

nouns and verbs with little use of adjectives.

1—Uses only isolated words to describe the picture and/or unable to do any retelling.

Fluency:

4—Uses lots of connected, descriptive details when talking about the visual and/or the story. Oral sharing is well organized and well thought out.

3—Uses some descriptive details while talking about the visual and/or the story. Oral retelling is somewhat organized.

2—Uses only a simple sentence or two when talking about the visual and/or the story. Oral retelling is very limited.

1—Uses simple labels with one or two words (e.g., rock, boy) for elements in the visual and/or the story.

4

Consistent and meaningful practice with oral language builds students' listening skills and increases their desire to use language for other purposes as well, such as reading and writing. Through the different opportunities that teachers provide, students can learn to use English to articulate their words and express their thoughts clearly. The following activities can be used to support learners as they enhance their oral language skills, along with their listening, reading, and writing skills.

Phrase It and Stick It

Grade Level: 2–6

Materials:

- Pictures representing the topics being covered in the class
- Set of sentence starters or stems to guide students' phrase development (optional)

- Sentence starters/stems can be created and provided to students if they struggle to come up with an original phrase. These starters/stems might require that students only have to add an original word to complete the phrase.

- Sticky notes

Directions:

1. Explain to the students that we will work on an activity that helps us practice our oral language skills. Our task is to create an original phrase in response to the pictures we see. The phrase might explain what the picture is about or what is in the picture.

- For instance, in response to a picture of a house, the original phrase might be "*A mighty house*."

2. Place students in small groups, and give each group a set of two or three pictures that reflect the topic being covered or the book being read.
3. Have each small group select one of the visuals.
4. Ask each student to think of an original phrase in response to their group's picture.
5. Have students take turns sharing their original phrases with group members.
6. After each student has shared their own original phrase, give each group sticky notes (enough for each student to have one).
7. At this point, the task for each student is to choose any *one* of the original phrases shared by anyone in the small group and write it on the sticky note.
8. Then have students add their sticky notes to the picture.
9. Have groups repeat this process for all the pictures.
10. Next have each group select one picture that they will use to share out to the class their sticky note phrases.
11. Recap for students by explaining that in this activity, they started with sharing and building

11. Recap for students by explaining that in this activity, they started with sharing and building oral language and then transitioned toward advancing their own writing.

Observing Students:

As students are working, document their oral language production as they create original phrases. Consider the way students use grammar, tenses, adjectives, and so forth in their language production. You can also do an authentic error analysis of students' language production in real time. As they are creating phrases, gauge the kinds of errors they are making and record your findings.

5

Differentiating Instruction:

- Jot down notes about the patterns of errors students are making in their language production. These notes will support your instructional conversations and language modeling in subsequent lessons.
- Focus on students' written language development as they transfer original phrases to the sticky notes. Your knowledge of students' strengths and challenges can inform decisions about supportive group configurations.
- For students who are able to complete the activity with relative ease, encourage them to try to link together all the sticky note ideas to create a connected description of the picture. Phrases should be arranged so that they make sense syntactically as well as semantically. This extension can be taken a step farther by your asking students to write this connected description.

Additional Notes:

This activity can be repeated as often as desired throughout the academic school year.

I Learn, I Extend, I Remember

Grade Level: 5–8

Materials:

- Curricular materials
- Blank pieces of paper (one per student)
- Writing utensils

Directions:

- Have students begin by using a blank piece of paper to create a three-column chart for taking notes. They can simply fold a piece of paper to create three columns or you can give them a template with three columns drawn on it.
- Next have students write at the top of the first column, "What did I/we learn?"; at the top of second column, "How did we learn it?"; and at the top of third column, "How can I connect it to the outside world?"
- As you read the book or cover the lesson material, have students stop at strategic points and add their ideas to the three-column notes.
    - At each stopping point, have students first share what they learned in their small groups.
    - After students have orally synthesized what they have learned and how they learned it, ask them to transfer their thoughts onto the three-column chart. Providing the opportunity to complete this process orally first will result in students generating and recording a much more elaborated response.
    - Another way to support students to orally express and expand upon their thoughts is to have students first record a visual depiction of their learnings in the first column and then describe their visuals orally to their small group. Subsequently, students can expand their documentation by adding writing to accompany the visuals on their three-column notes.
    - Next have students discuss real-world applications of their learning. Have students add their ideas to the chart as they discuss. Be sure to emphasize these

connections during your instructional conversations with students (small groups, whole class, and individuals).

6

Observing Students:

As students work on their activity, observe them and listen to their discussions so you can see how their oral language is evolving. You can integrate a simple oral language development checklist to gauge how your students are developing over time.

Make sure to ask probing questions. As you ask questions, again allow students to first discuss the answers as partners or small groups. Through these conversations, you can hear the kind of language students are using to form their arguments.

The activity itself can become a form of formative assessment for language development as students attend to the task. Collect the chart from students at the end of the lesson to see how their writing is progressing. Give them feedback on their writing skills to support continued development.

Differentiating Instruction:

- Through concurrent discussions while the activity is unfolding, you will be able to provide instructional support based on the formative data you are gathering.
- As the activity progresses, consider the degree to which your students are making appropriate gains toward the associated outcomes. Make adjustments during the course of the activity to redirect learning, as needed.
- Your observation of challenges and successes during group and partner work will inform how you redirect the interaction component of future activities.

Additional Notes:

This activity can be utilized within any content area to support students' comprehension and retention of the curricular material. It is ideal for prompting students to extend their ideas to real-

world applications. This activity also supports the teacher's informal assessment of students' language skills in real time.

Marketed Instructional Materials

Although spontaneous human language is dynamic and best assessed in authentic, interactive contexts, students must also learn to mediate the more structured language of academic instruction and curricular texts. Talented teachers find multiple ways to use marketed materials. The key is always to begin with a firm grasp of the desired outcome or benefit. The prevalence of fun, colorful, ready-made activities can steer us toward products that don't meet our needs or can't be modified or adapted for individual gain. On face value they are convenient—"everything you need" in one book, box, or link. Minutes gained in lesson planning are lost tenfold by lack of instructional benefit.

Avoid activities for the sake of activities. Instead, consider whether the task complexity and/or scaffolding can be easily targeted, tracked, and incrementally ratcheted to measure and advance language growth. The student's performance on similar tasks over time may also be cited as indicators of progress monitoring for the purposes of response to intervention (to be discussed in Chapter 7).

7

Teaching Tips:

When purposefully selecting marketed materials, consider:

- What skills are important for my students to gain, strengthen, or practice?
- Do these materials foster deeper connections to particular concepts, or application of skills?
- Can the materials be used to create or support a strategy my students use to aid their own learning?
- Are the stimuli used (pictures, reading level, experience assumptions) appropriate for my students?
- Will use of this material be inclusive (adaptable), or stratifying?

- What will I learn by observing my students use of this material?
- How will insights gained inform my instruction?

Using Language Information to Inform Instruction

Throughout this chapter, we have presented an in-depth review of both formal and informal assessment tests, tools, and strategies that can be used in practice. These assessments can provide educators with information on the language acquisition and proficiency of the learner. Our individual context and role as an educator often determine how and when we use particular assessments, and for what purposes.

In this chapter, we have tried to provide a blueprint for making decisions on diagnostic assessments, placement, instruction, and ongoing monitoring. Standardized assessment must always be approached with caution, given the multitude of variables that can influence scores as well as the high-stakes nature of many educational decisions. Informal, ongoing assessments can provide us with a closer look at the potential of the learner within different situational contexts.

Language acquisition is a dynamic process influenced by a student's unique biography as well as the teaching and learning context. We always must remember that assessment and instruction are interrelated. Assessment provides a baseline, or the point of departure, for making decisions about what is best for the learner. With regular use, assessments can allow us to chart growth as students continue to progress on their language acquisition journeys. What happens between each data point—daily instruction—is at the heart of the language acquisition process. Classroom instruction can either help accelerate language development or inhibit progress.

Teachers can increase the effectiveness of their daily instruction by using language assessment results in the following ways:

- Plan specific activities and strategies for students, to build on identified strengths and target areas for growth.
- Plan appropriate interventions for students.

- Plan appropriate interventions for students.
- Place students in pairs and small groups that ensure a balance of challenge and support.
- Implement scaffolds during instruction to bolster language comprehension and production.
- Gauge what is working during instruction and what needs to be adapted or modified.
- Make adjustments to grouping configurations.
- Monitor effectiveness of interventions.

8

Regardless of professional role or context, understanding language assessment is essential when serving CLD students. As educators, our knowledge, action, and advocacy often determine the quality of our students' educational journeys.

Programming-Related Issues: Assessment of Language Proficiency

Issues of placement and programming for CLD students who are acquiring English as a second language are topics beyond the scope of this text. Nonetheless, the results of assessing language proficiency can aid decision making associated with these issues. Therefore, the following discussion highlights how language proficiency assessment is relevant to the identification, placement, monitoring, and exit of CLD students. This discussion is by no means exhaustive, but it provides a synopsis of issues that should be considered.

Identification

Assessing English language proficiency is critical in determining whether a CLD student can participate in the curriculum without additional supports. This determination should be, but is not always, based on a combination of factors. Standardized assessment results, informal assessment outcomes, observation, and parent and teacher input all serve to inform our understanding of a student's language abilities. Students whose English language proficiency does not meet stated criteria are often identified as limited English proficient and, as a result, are entitled to instructional modifications and access to language programs designed to alleviate language issues in content-area learning.

Placement

Careful consideration of language proficiency data and academic skills, combined with knowledge of available programs (e.g., transitional bilingual, dual language, content-based ESL), is necessary for identifying the setting that will provide the CLD student maximum access to the curriculum. The appropriateness of student placement is determined through ongoing assessment of language acquisition, social adjustment, and curricular learning.

Monitoring

Alternate versions of formal assessments that can be readministered at midyear provide a useful update on student progress and can be used to help determine whether to reassign a student to grade-level classes. Informal assessment approaches and other forms of data gathering discussed earlier are also vital in helping teachers monitor student status and progress relative to changing curricular demands.

Exit

The redesignation of CLD students has the potential to affect perceived student or program success. Students must typically meet language proficiency and academic criteria to be exited from the English learner (EL) designation. Because higher-performing students who exit a language program are continually replaced by lower-proficiency students entering the program, it is nearly impossible for this group as a whole to demonstrate the type of progress required by state or federal mandates.

9

Assessment in Action 5.2

Teachers can use a portfolio to document a CLD student's development in all four language domains (i.e., listening, speaking, reading, and writing). A portfolio is the most comprehensive method of understanding the students' linguistic assets and needs. The following checklist provides possible items to be included in the ongoing assessment and monitoring of language skills.

Portfolio/Cumulative Folder Checklist

Items to Be Included			Date
Home Visit Interview or Parent Survey on Language Use			
Home Language Survey			
Initial Language Test (e.g., LAS)			
Subsequent Language Tests	Grade	Score	
	Kindergarten	/	
	First	/	
	Second	/	
	Third	/	
	Fourth	/	
	Fifth	/	
CLD Student Biography Card or Background Survey			
Informal BICS Evaluation (L1 and L2)			
Informal CALP Evaluation (L1 and L2)			

Native Language:	
• Literacy Screening (Grades K–5)	
• Reading Benchmark (Grades 3–5)	
• Writing Sample (Grades 3–5)	
English Language:	
• Literacy Screening (Grades K–5)	
• Reading Levels (Grades 3–5)	
• Early Writing Assessment	
Cognitive Learning Strategy Use (classroom observation notes)	

o

Historically, such a scenario has tempted states to enact policies to keep redesignated students in this EL category for up to 2 years (Abedi, 2004), or simply delay the redesignation of qualified students. This practice effectively denies otherwise capable students access to a more appropriate and challenging curriculum (Abedi & Dietel, 2004).

Today, federal law requires local education agencies (LEAs) to submit to their states data on the number and percentage of EL students who:

- Are making progress toward English language proficiency
- Attain proficiency needed to exit EL services, and
- Have been classified as EL for more than 5 years

Additionally, LEAs must also provide information regarding the number and percentage of former English learners who meet academic content standards for 4 years after exiting English development programs. The rationale for this is to ensure that the overriding emphasis of programming for English learners relates to academic access.

Educators are well advised to consider multilevel educational and linguistic criteria, rather than political agendas, to determine when students are ready to participate in the full curriculum of an English-only classroom environment. Central to these considerations is the acknowledgement that

data regarding reclassification and achievement reflect not only on the English learners described, but also on the degree to which instructional methods used are effective in the promotion of language proficiency and academic success.

6

Formative Content-Area Assessment

Formative assessments are tools and strategies employed by grade-level and other teachers to determine what and how their students are learning so that instruction can be modified accordingly while it is still in progress. This process is somewhat like referring to a compass every few miles to check your direction rather than waiting until you have reached the end of the line (or not) to realize you were on the wrong track. Formative assessments enable educators to make teaching more responsive. They largely depend on teachers' knowledge, their ability to create classroom environments that invite student engagement and expression, and their observational skills (Herrera, 2016; Johnston & Afflerbach, 2015). For instance, as Johnston and Afflerbach illustrate, "we can learn a lot about children's word knowledge from their invented spelling, provided the classroom environment encourages it and teachers know how to interpret it." Formative assessments can be either informal or formal. Both types are discussed in this chapter.

Informal Formative Assessment

Perhaps no single form of assessment is as effective for the teacher or as beneficial for the CLD student as informal formative assessment. The tools typically associated with this type of assessment hold the capacity to reveal the nature and strength of *incremental* academic progress. For the teacher, the assessment of incremental progress provides a more realistic, authentic portrait of the student's capacities as well as her or his strides in both language acquisition and content-area learning. The knowledge gained from these assessments reduces the potential frustration of many teachers and keeps their instructional accommodations focused on incremental, but ongoing, progress.

Voices *from the* Field 6.2

In my kindergarten classroom, small centers are a way students are assessed informally. Each center has an objective, which most students will meet at about the two-week mark. Students must complete activities at their center by either playing a game, completing a puzzle, sorting objects, answering questions, matching letters or numbers, or reading sight words. The activities completed in small centers are designed to help students advance by providing various ways of completing the same objective. Since small centers are focused on individual skill areas, it is easy to see where students are struggling. The consistency of working on specific content areas and then retesting helps give me a good perspective on where my students are and how much they have progressed over a couple of weeks. This helps me modify activities and ways of teaching for the students who are struggling. I constantly speak with the paras [paraeducators] and ESL [English as a second language] teachers who are also involved with students in my classroom. We talk about what we see and discuss different strategies to help students learn difficult content.

Donita Estes, Kindergarten Teacher. Reprinted by permission.

For CLD students, the assessment and documentation of these incremental gains tend to both

lower the affective filter and enhance motivation for new learning. Too often, formal assessment measures fail to provide these students with any sense of progress and accomplishment. In contrast, informal formative assessments provide opportunities to encourage, motivate, and challenge these students to higher levels of academic achievement and language acquisition.

Inquiry Assessment/Inquiry-Based Learning

Before reading *Bob the Snowman* (Loretan & Lenica, 1993) to her kindergarten class, Ms. Lam asks if anyone has ever seen a snowman. Most have not, but several volunteer that they have indeed seen a *real* one on TV or in a movie. Ms. Lam begins reading the story of a snowman living up North who is told by a migrating bird how beautiful everything is, and how much more fun it is, in the South. Bob decides he'd like to go there, too. Ms. Lam draws the students' attention to the picture of Bob in the snowy North and the bird in the sunny South and asks the class if Bob should go. They respond with a resounding "Yes!"

Ms. Lam: Look at where Bob lives now. Is it hot or cold?

Several voices: Cold!

Ms. Lam: How can you tell it's cold?

Juan: (He raises his hand and then points to the picture of a boy in a coat.)

Ms. Lam: Good thinking! I wear a coat when it's cold, too. Who wore a coat to school today? (Several heads shake "No.")

Ms. Lam: Why didn't you wear a coat, Marisa?

Marisa: It's too hot!

Ms. Lam: What's it like in the South? Is it hot or cold? (The picture shows the bird in a palm tree on a sunny beach.)

Class: Hot! (Ms. Lam turns the page as Bob begins his journey.)

Ms. Lam: As Bob heads for the train station . . .

Marco (in an apparent non sequitur): Bob's got a snow cone head!

Ms. Lam: Yes, his head and body are made of snow like a snow cone. How many of you have ever had a snow cone? (Eight hands fly into the air.) What happens to snow cones on a really hot day?

Julia: My snow cone melted in the park.

Juan: It gets water.

Marisa: Bob's going to melt!

With this revelation, the class revises their advice to Bob, although he travels anyway. Eventually, he does melt, turns into a puddle, evaporates, becomes a fluffy cloud, blows north, gets heavier, and returns home in the form of new-fallen snow. This wonderful story has different levels of concepts that range from basic vocabulary and emotions to prediction, sequencing, weather, states of matter, life cycles, cause-and-effect patterns, and story format.

Ms. Lam had used this book easily in her previous school but had never encountered a group like this, in which no one had experience with snow. She was ill prepared for the initial inability of her students to see a problem with Bob's plan. By relating Bob's head to a snow cone, Marco provided a context that bridged others' prior learning with unfamiliar concepts and allowed the students to work at higher levels of understanding throughout the remainder of the story. Ms. Lam decided, and noted in her reflection journal, that when she introduces *Bob the Snowman* next year, she'll remember not to limit prior learning connections to the snows of her New England past but also include the snow cones of her students' Laredo, Texas, present.

8

One of the most common types of informal formative assessment occurs in the dialogue of teaching, as exemplified by this vignette. The information teachers receive from the process of *inquiry-based assessment* can inform them about students' developing language skills and content knowledge. Dialogue that evolves during the inquiry-based learning process is a product of real-time formative assessment that occurs as the learning unfolds. When students engage in social learning of this kind, they have opportunities to receive various types of embedded feedback (Learning and Teaching Coordinating Network, 2016).

Research demonstrates that teachers who recognize and differentially respond to student learning behaviors (e.g., individual responses to questions) during spontaneous interaction positively influence student learning (Ruiz-Primo, 2011). For some teachers, this begins rather intuitively, is reinforced through experience, and is best validated by the success of their students. It becomes a natural part of how they teach. These teachers catch those on-the-fly moments in which clarification, connection with prior learning, and probes of higher-order thinking keep all learners engaged with the curriculum and continuing to move forward.

To get a reliable window into the content-area learning of English learners, teachers particularly need to take care when structuring the types of questions posed. For example, newcomers like Juan in the scenario can often demonstrate comprehension of targeted information by pointing to an object, word, or picture or by responding yes, no, thumbs up, or thumbs down to simple

an object, word, or picture or by responding yes, no, thumbs up, or thumbs down to simple questions. Teachers can accommodate students' language levels by using basic "wh" questions, and then "how" and "why" questions, before they attempt more abstract prompts or complex questions. Sample prompts and questions in a discussion about *Bob the Snowman* might include the following:

- "Show me the snowman."
- "Where is it cold?"
- "Who spoke to Bob?"
- "Should Bob go south?"
- "Why not?" (Students with limited proficiency in English can demonstrate advanced thinking by pointing to the sun, just as Juan pointed to a jacketed child to answer the inferential question, "How can you tell it's cold?")

Inquiry assessment can also take the form of a whole-class inclusion activity. For example, prompts like the following could be used for an activity in which each student has a sheet with pictured objects and animals:

- "Point to the cheese."
- "Who ate the cheese?"
- "Point to all the animals."
- "Which animal is bigger, the dog or the horse?" (answer embedded)
- "Which animal [vehicle, dinosaur, etc.] do you like best?"
- "Raise your hand to tell me *why* you like it best."

In a science conversation about plants, questions might include:

- "Does our plant need water?" (thumbs up, thumbs down)

- "Does our plant need soil, or dirt?"
- "Does our plant need ice cream?"
- "Does our plant need sun?"
- "Does our plant need snow?"
- "Raise your hand to tell me why you think it does or does not need snow."
- "Raise your hand to tell me how you think the plant gets food."

9

Open-ended questions are more difficult but have value as a modeled and anticipated form of query that can be answered by others or with the support of native language partners until CLD students are ready to respond independently. Figure 6.1 summarizes types of questions and prompts that are appropriate for students in different stages of second language acquisition.

Figure 6.1

Questions and Prompts According to Stage of SLA

The sentence/questioning stems included here are categorized by a specific stage of language acquisition for illustration purposes only. Students may move rather quickly through the stages, or they may be ready for more advanced questioning despite the majority of their language skills reflecting a lower level of proficiency.	
Preproduction Questions or directives that students can respond to or follow before they are ready to speak • Where is _____? • Show me the _____. • Bring me the _____.	**Early Production** Yes/no questions • Is this a _____? • Is a spider an insect? Either/or questions • Did Billy go to a store or park?

- Point to the _____.
- Touch your _____.
- Who is wearing _____?
- Put the _____ on the _____.
- Give _____the _____.
- Who wants _____?

- Is this food or clothing?

One- to two-word response questions

- Who is the line leader today?
- What is Kenya riding?

Questions that elicit naming items from groups or categories

- What animals did we see at the zoo?
- Which of these were marsupials?

Speech Emergence

Questions that require elaboration

- *Why* did Will miss the bus?
- *How* did he get to school?
- *What happened* when he got to school?

Questions that ask for more information

- *Tell me about* your vacation.
- *Describe* your favorite place.

Intermediate Fluency

Questions that inspire/probe higher-order thinking skills

- What will happen if? . . .
- How are _____ and _____ alike?
- How are they different?
- What would you do if . . .
- What do you think about . . .
- How did you vote and why?

Source: Based on Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (n.d.). Sample assessment instruments. Curriculum Frameworks Project. Author.

In all cases, visual referents and use of the native language as a resource provide much-needed support until a student's performance suggests that she or he no longer needs the assistance. Thinking of instructional questions as keys rather than probes is helpful. Each is uniquely shaped to open a specific door, inviting a student to bring his or her knowledge into the learning zone. In constructive classroom environments, this door remains open for access to prior knowledge and experiences that are the bricks and mortar of each student's ability to construct new knowledge.

o

When classroom teachers use predictable patterns of conversation assessment, students begin to anticipate questions and think about the material in terms of inquiry. This can occur, however, only when adequate time is provided for responses. It is not uncommon for teachers to wait less than one second for a response after they pose a question. If no student response is provided in that time, they are likely to either ask another question or answer the question themselves (Bond, 2008; Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2004; Kaur & Hashim, 2014). This practice excludes the CLD student, who requires more time to process language, and all students need time to be able to formulate their thinking. As Bond (2008) explains, before students can reply, they must hear the question, determine whether they understand the question, and recall information from memory. All this takes time.

If we teachers want serious thinking from our students, we must be willing to provide them the time necessary to make it happen (Sun, 2012). The only kinds of questions a student can answer within a very short time are generally those requiring very little thought or formulation. Rather than facilitating or assessing higher-level thinking, these types of questions merely probe the efficiency with which students memorize facts.

To develop questioning as a formative assessment tool, we must go beyond the standard questioning procedure. We cannot merely ask the question, have students respond to it, and move on. Questioning in itself is a strategy that becomes formative in nature when we pose questions to seek information that we then interpret and use to enhance and develop our students' language and content knowledge (Jiang, 2014). As Jiang explains, to facilitate this process we should:

1. Pose questions that are pivotal to students' construction of understanding.
2. Seek responses that make known students' thought processes, which provide teachers with the most useful information for instruction.
3. Respond by providing meaningful interventions that guide students along the way to achieving their learning objectives.

Assessment Freeze Frame 6.1

> Thinking of instructional questions as keys rather than probes is helpful. Each is uniquely shaped to open a specific door, inviting a student to bring his or her knowledge into the learning zone.

Teaching Tips:

- Adapt the language of the question for maximum comprehension.
- Formulate questions that elicit deeper levels of thought but can be answered without complex language.
- Allow adequate time for responding.
- Affirm "I don't know" answers as opportunities to engage the class in brainstorming ways to make sense of the material.
- Use questions as a means for reciprocal language use; as the student provides an answer, use that answer to further probe with how or why questions.
- Leverage questions to elicit interaction among learners; when posing a question, ask students to dialogue with each other in pairs or small groups before formulating a response.

1

As students' language proficiencies increase, their attention to the higher-level language in

cognitive prompts and responses of others encourages their own processing of the concepts at more advanced levels. The objective of this type of assessment approach is to determine what the student has learned from the lesson and what that implies for instruction.

U-C-ME (Uncover, Concentrate, Monitor, Evaluate) Strategy

Grade Level: 2–12

Materials:

- Copies of the U-C-ME template (one per student)

Directions:

- *Uncover*
  - Place students in small groups and give each student a blank U-C-ME template.
  - Have students write the name of the topic/concept that is the focus of the lesson around the outside of the center oval.
  - Ask students to write down everything they "bring to the table" or know about the topic/concept in the center oval. Encourage students to write down information in their native language if they prefer.
  - Have students discuss ideas with peers.
- *Concentrate*
  - Ask students to think of specific questions they may have about the topic. Model this first by posing sample questions for two or three of the spokes. Generate questions that require students' higher-order thinking skills.
  - Have students work as a class to pose their own questions for the remaining spokes. Together, the questions will become the guide for student learning.
  - During instruction, make sure to concentrate on information that can be used to

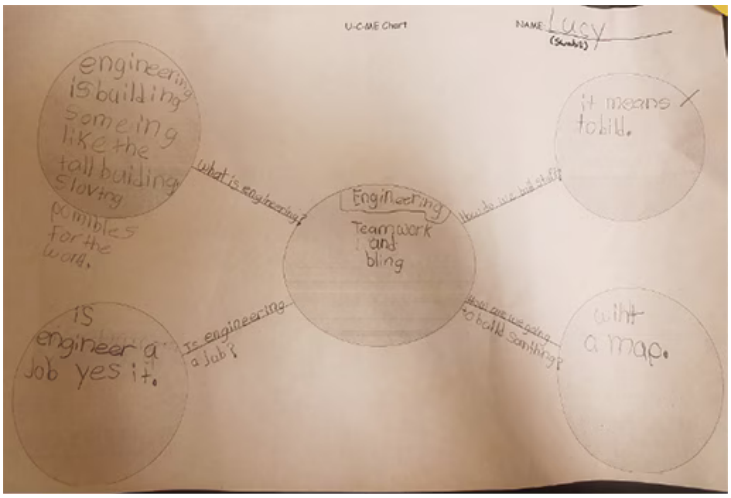
answer the questions.

- To guide students, you may want to create a whole class U-C-ME template on which you model how to document key learning.

- *Monitor*
  - Have students monitor their learning by placing responses to each of the questions posed in the corresponding ovals (see Figure 6.2).
  - Provide opportunities for students to discuss their responses with peers in their small group.

Figure 6.2

Assessment Artifact: U-C-ME


U-C-ME Chart
NAME Lucy
engineering is building someing like the tall building moving pomibles for the world.
What is engineering?
Engineering
Teamwork and bling
it means to bild.
is engineer a job yes it.
Is engineering a job?
with a map.

This artifact depicts the completed U-C-ME graphic organizer of a second grader who is a native Swahili speaker in the Speech Emergence stage of second language acquisition. The teacher, Mr. Gruber, adapted the standard strategy template to meet the developmental needs of his learners. Reflecting on his use of the strategy, he shared:

> As a second grade teacher, I was impressed at how fast students picked up the understanding of engineering ideas and how quickly vocabulary words were being used independently. . . . The chart [U-C-ME template] can be adapted to fit the abilities of all students. Teachers may have to lead the students in younger levels whereas older students can be more independent with using this chart. Overall, the goals of developing students' vocabulary, proper English comprehension/usage, and content knowledge can be met by using this strategy.

- *Evaluate*

- The final evaluation of student understanding can be done by having students use what was written in the ovals to summarize what they learned about the topic or concept.
    - Persuasive or narrative paragraph
    - Oral conversation with a peer (discussing what was learned and where or how it was learned)

2

Observing Students:

Circulate among students to note their connections to background knowledge as they uncover what they know. Pay attention to what students subsequently share with one another in their small group conversations. Resulting insights can be used to highlight predictions about the topic and unique skill sets or knowledge among the community of learners. Similarly observe students as they monitor their understanding. Information gathered will support your ability to emphasize key aspects of the curriculum and the learning process and redirect if necessary. Continued observation of students during the evaluation phase of the strategy will enable you to provide additional targeted feedback to individuals and to the whole group.

Differentiating Instruction:

- Jot down notes about student thinking and performance as you proceed with the lesson. Anecdotal notes on students' connections to background knowledge will inform the links you make to boost relevance of the content.
- Make sure to document students who struggle with the process of generating questions. This skill is critical for active reading, and it can be revisited as students proceed with reading the text during the lesson.
- Student thinking that stands out as an example of innovation, collaboration, personal progress, struggle, or self-doubt will inform your in-the-moment response as well as your evaluation and feedback on the final product/performance.

3

Additional Notes:

This strategy can be used with any content area and repeated as often as desired. After initial modeling and with consistent use, this strategy can quickly become a student learning strategy that CLD students are able to apply to learning in other areas of their life.

Source: Adapted from Herrera (2016), p. 171.

Observation Assessment

José struggles self-consciously and quits prematurely when called on to read in class. It seems he is still a nonreader. One day Mrs. Kay notes that he follows along well with his fingers as other students read aloud, pausing precisely where they do. In that moment, she makes a preliminary assessment that he may in fact be reading silently but is not yet able or ready to read aloud unsupported. She alters her instruction by having the whole class read the next paragraph together. Ms. Kay watches as José reads the entire paragraph aloud with the class and makes a note in her anecdotal log. She excitedly decides to have students do this again tomorrow, alternating choral reading with student-read sentences to see if José will be more comfortable or capable of reading smaller segments by himself.

Through cycles of observation and modification, teachers such as Ms. Kay are informally assessing their students throughout the day. *Observation assessment* is another type of informal formative assessment that is particularly useful in the accommodation of CLD students. Teacher observations made during instruction can provide information that may be crucial to determining the root of a student's difficulties, or a particular strength, with content-area material. Such observations also enable teachers to provide students with opportunities to build their confidence and readiness to attempt higher levels of classroom involvement.

The advantage Ms. Kay has is that she also documents these instances of informal assessment and uses the new information to alter her instruction according to the learning responses of her students. This ongoing refinement (similar to the kind of responsiveness previously discussed in

relation to questioning) allows her to zero in on the zones in which her students are capable of maximal growth as she adjusts her teaching to those levels.

A potential drawback to a reliance on unplanned informal assessment is that even highly significant observations that occur in the course of instruction are likely to remain unrecorded. The primary reason is that too much is happening in a dynamic classroom. That's one reason that ready-made or teacher-created observation checklists are popular. These can take many forms, limited only by the teacher's creativity, preferences, and time. One method, adaptable to any setting, involves listing all or selected students along the left side of a single page and targeted curricular behaviors along the top. As illustrated in Figure 6.3 (and the related appendix resource), a teacher can easily note with narrative detail or a simple checkmark the occurrence of observed behaviors during specified or unspecified activities. Checklists are especially helpful when educators observe students in action, working collaboratively, or exhibiting unpredicted or spontaneous evidence of skills (e.g., correctly counting change for the vending machine). Documentation of the conditions in which a behavior occurs, as well as those in which it does not, can be instructive in the design of future learning environments, activities, and interventions.

Figure 6.3

Observation Checklist

Student Name	Follows directions without a model	Uses nonverbals to communicate understanding or express needs	Uses single words to answer questions or express needs	Uses simple sentence structures for social purposes	Uses simple sentence structures for curricular purposes
Ahmed A.	X	X	X	X	
Feliciana G.		X			
Mindy H.		X	X	X	

Luciano L.	X	X	X		
Ghassem M.	X	X			
Van N.	X	X	X	X	X
Sara N.	X	X	X	X	
John (Kang) V.	X	X	X		

Informal observation assessment can also look at how well students learn through their own observations. Many of us can cite examples of students learning negative behaviors by watching others, but this natural tendency to learn by example can also be drawn on positively during classroom instruction. Children have been found to learn just as effectively through intently observed activities as those experienced hands-on. This is particularly potent for CLD students who are going through periods of relative silence or acculturation (as discussed in Chapter 4) but who may be able to learn well through scaffolded observation and instructional accommodations. Central to the concept is that the observed activity is understandable and that there is an anticipation of imminent or eventual participation (Rogoff, 2014).

Accommodative Assessment Practices 6.1

Effective use of scaffolded observation is demonstrated in the following scenario:

Ms. Reyes looks out on eight kindergarten students circled in front of her on the carpet. They excitedly eye her plain brown bag. They've seen it before. It always holds something different . . . but it's always something fun! Ms. Reyes carefully removes each item, labeling, describing, and discussing its use. There are two cans of frosting (vanilla and chocolate), several toppings (shredded coconut, yellow candy stars, and red sprinkles), plastic knives, spoons, paper napkins, plates, and two kinds of cookies. Ms. Reyes intentionally calls on those with the strongest language and academic skills first. All eyes are riveted on the cookies.

Ms. Reyes: Josh, would you like a cookie?

Josh: Yes, please.

Ms. Reyes: Which kind would you like, a white sugar cookie or a brown chocolate cookie?

Josh: A brown chocolate cookie.

Ms. Reyes: Let's put your cookie on a plate. How would you like me to decorate it? I have . . . (she points while naming all the options).

Josh: Chocolate frosting.

Ms. Reyes: Here's the chocolate frosting. What should I do with it?

Josh: Put it on the cookie. (Ms. Reyes puts the can of frosting on the cookie. There is silence and then the students laugh.)

Josh: No, you have to open it. (She opens the can.)

Josh: Put it on the cookie . . . please. (She begins to set the can on the cookie a second time.)

Josh: Put it on the cookie !!! please! (She begins to set the can on the cookie a second time.)

Josh: Not the can; put the *frosting* on the cookie! (Ms. Reyes looks into the can, puzzled.)

Josh: Put the knife in. (She puts the knife in and leaves it.)

Josh (laughing): Scoop it out and put it, no, *spread* it on the cookie!

This pattern of scaffolding, modeling, and self-expansion continues through all phases of decoration. The finished cookies are set aside until all are completed, and the process becomes more efficient with successive student turns, even though several students face communicative challenges. The language use of CLD students is noticeably more specific and complex under these conditions than during regular classroom discourse. The students enjoy the humor of the lesson but also realize Ms. Reyes will follow their instructions explicitly, attending to words such as *in, on, more, as much, enough, spread, shake, sprinkle,* and so forth. Academic vocabulary pertaining to color, size, position, and quantity concepts also becomes meaningful in this context.

Ms. Reyes observes when students are unable to produce the targeted structures and modifies her prompts accordingly. For example, Nahla has been in school 2 months and has little prior exposure to English. Observation checklists reveal she uses mostly single words and gestures to communicate in the classroom. By the time her turn arrives, Nahla has been watching intently. She knows what she wants and has grasped the most significant words that will make that happen. With every classmate's previous turn, she has very likely rehearsed her own requests.

Nahla: Cookie . . . chocolate!

Ms. Reyes: You want a chocolate cookie? Here's a chocolate cookie. Do you want frosting?

Nahla: Chocolate frosting . . . please. (Nahla does not wait for a prompt.) Put knife . . . frosting on cookie.

Later, in response to Ms. Reyes's sprinkling of only a tiny amount of red candy on top, Nahla shakes her head and before a model can be provided says, "Not enough . . . more candy, please."

Although the lesson seems simple, in a very short time Ms. Reyes has added another important dimension to her own knowledge about how Nahla and the other students learn. This informal yet deliberate assessment has indicated that several students not previously thought to have acquired many kindergarten concepts did indeed have the cognitive ability to learn curricular material in a highly communicative lesson that maximized the learning potential of anticipatory observation. Given other indicators, Nahla was only expected to use single words and perhaps demonstrate recognition of one or two colors. Instead, after observing others' work, she responded at multiple levels by using expanded utterances and grasping unanticipated curricular concepts.

As illustrated in this scenario, one of the most exciting aspects of differentiated instruction is that it also allows for differentiated assessment. Such purposeful differentiation can occur in a variety of contexts at all academic levels.

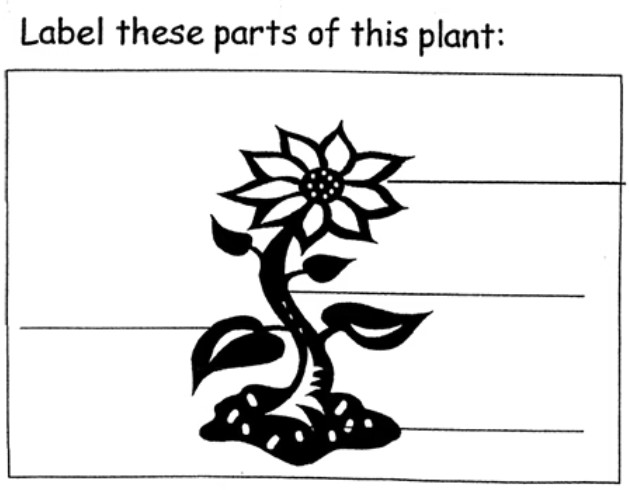
6

Structured Authentic Assessments

Ms. McKinley knows that CLD students in the early stages of second language acquisition might have difficulty comprehending a science unit on plant parts. Therefore, she and some of her fellow teachers designed a science activity with language modifications that would enable the participation of all students in the class. The activity involves having students work in heterogeneous (Spanish and English) pairs to identify the parts of an illustrated plant. As one modification (see Figure 6.4), the students are given an unlabeled diagram of the plant along with word cards in Spanish and English for the different plant parts. The partners take turns placing the Spanish and English words in the appropriate blanks. Students check their work using a plant diagram that is labeled with terms in both languages. When the activity is used as an individual assessment, each student is given an unlabeled diagram and a set of the Spanish and English word cards. The student then glues the word cards in (or near) the blanks.

Figure 6.4

Plant Part Identification



flower	flor
flowers	flores
stem	tallo
leaf	hoja
root	raíz

Although educators occasionally are fortunate to observe behaviors related to desired skills in unplanned situations, most of the time the skills demonstrated by students will depend on the opportunities inherent in the educational activities that teachers plan. As explored in depth in Chapter 2, the design of structured authentic assessments reflects teacher efforts to develop activities that maximize student demonstration of curricular knowledge and skills. The preceding vignette illustrates that teachers of CLD students also plan modifications that will help ensure students' assessment performance accurately conveys their abilities related to target knowledge and skills. Authentic assessments such as this provide learners the opportunity to demonstrate conceptual knowledge without being hindered by language challenges.

7

Another of the many ways to assess students in authentic contexts is to develop situations or scenarios in which students exhibit targeted skills while working toward the creation of a project or

product. In such contexts, students are engaged and motivated to draw on all their skills and resources to achieve an identified goal. The following scenario illustrates the effective use of an authentic, cooperative group assessment with CLD students.

Ms. William's 2nd-grade class is studying living creatures and their environments. They recently had the opportunity to visit the local zoo and see many animals. The zoo guide was interesting but talked much too fast for some of the English learners. Fortunately, Ms. William had made sure that native-English-speaking peers were included in each group of students to facilitate understanding. She knew that using the native language helps students learn, but some of the English-speaking students also do a very nice job of retelling information in creatively comprehensible ways.

During the zoo visit, the students were encouraged to take notes or draw pictures to remind themselves of the most interesting details about the animals or places they saw. Later, each group used this information to develop questions for the other students. The questions often required that students give detailed descriptions of the animals or their environment. A checklist guided the students to develop at least one question each about an animal classification (e.g., Turtles and snakes belong to which group?), a geographical region (e.g., Name three animals that live in the jungle.), animal eating habits (e.g., What do ducks eat?), and a predatory relationship (e.g., What animal likes to eat ducks?). As students quizzed one another, they noticed how many different correct answers were elicited from each group.

8

The next day, students continued to work in groups to design their own zoos. Ms. William informed them that the zoo would be located just outside town, so they needed to consider the region's weather conditions and determine each animal's appropriateness for the zoo or need for shelter.

Students were asked to include at least one type of animal that did not live in the zoo they had visited the previous day. The plan of the new zoo was to have more animals living together in realistic habitats than in the current zoo. The primary task for students was to create three habitats where at least 15 animals (five in each habitat) could live safely.

As they worked together, the students pooled their previously learned (but still fresh) knowledge. Jesse wanted the zoo to have chickens but knew from experience that chickens shouldn't live anywhere near foxes or snakes. Linda wanted prairie dogs in the farm habitat because cows, goats, and horses don't eat them. However, Sam knew that prairie dog burrows could break the horses' legs. When they finally finished, each group prepared to present its zoo to the class.

The class checked the ideas of each group by using a rubric to determine whether the group could (a) describe each habitat; (b) explain the reason for its plants, shelter, and boundary type; (c) explain why each animal was chosen; and (d) describe each animal's main traits. When Ms. William heard the groups share their final presentations, she was confident that all the students in her class had gained a far greater and more durable understanding of the curricular concepts (as well as greater ability to generalize them) than if she had just spent an entire week on verbal lessons followed by a paper-and-pencil test.

Teachers can also follow this type of collaborative activity with individual tests, a group test in which all members work together to discuss and record the answers, or a combination of both.

Assessment Freeze Frame 6.2

> The design of structured authentic assessments reflects the efforts of teachers to strategically select strategies that maximize assessment of curricular skills and knowledge.

Teacher-Made Tests

Mr. Jin places on the floor three pictures (covered, or pasted inside down-turned paper plates), which will serve as the possible answers to a question. He then explains to the class that one of

these is the correct answer to the question he is going to ask, but rather than focusing on the choices, they should first try to see if the answer pops into their heads. He reads the story-based question from the board.

Mr. Jin: What was the main setting for *Charlotte's Web*? (As he nods to their raised hands, the students volunteer "a farm" and "a fair.")

Mr. Jin: Are those names for the same place, or were there different settings in this story?

Class: Different settings.

Mr. Jin: Yes, let's reread the question together.

All: What was the main setting for *Charlotte's Web*?

Mr. Jin: The question asks for the *main* setting. What does that mean?

Sara: Where they were most of the time.

Snapshot from *Classroom Practice* 6.1

Ms. Lewis tries to incorporate authentic activities and assessments into her classroom assessment practices. To help her students learn the parts of a cell, she had students build models that include various cell parts and descriptions of their corresponding functions. This photograph depicts the work of a CLD student who labeled her animal cell model in both her native language and English.

In a reflection about this activity, Ms. Lewis wrote:

I have taught this science lesson for 3 years, and this is the first year that I had students make a model of the cell. Usually, we cover the lesson and do some worksheets. I think the model representation helped [CLD and other students] to remember the parts of the cell. We also viewed a video on cells this year, so students could visually see movement of live cells as well as different cell types and structures. I feel that I am growing professionally because I am now incorporating language support into my lessons, and I am focusing more on the needs and learning styles [preferences] of all of my students. The cell model offers an alternative form for assessing students.

Teachers such as Ms. Lewis who adapt and modify lessons to increase student engagement often have to "step out on a limb." After trying activities they have never previously used, effective teachers reflect on ways in which the lessons and related assessments succeeded and/or require further refinement.

Sheila Lewis

CELL MEMBRANE The cell membrane holds
the parts of the cell together and controls the
movement of
El NUCLEO
The nucleus is the control center
es el centro del control de la célula.
E.R. The endoplasmic reticulum moves
materials throughout the cell.
El reticulum de endoplasmic mueve las materias a través de la célula.
Los Ribosomas del RIBOSOMA producen las proteínas para la célula.
RIBOSOME Ribosomes produce proteins
for the cell.
CYTOPLASM Cytoplasm fills most of the cell outside
the nuleus. Organelles float in the cytoplasm.
El Citoplasma del CITOPLASMA llena la mayor parte de la célula fuera del
Organelles en el
citoplasma.
oles store water, nutrients,

Mr. Jin: Do you all agree?

Class: Yes!

Mr. Jin: What do you think was the main setting for most of the book?

Class: The farm.

Mr. Jin: Let's see if the farm is among our answers. (He reveals a picture of a school.)

Class: No, that's a school.

Mr. Jin: (Reveals the next picture of a market.)

Class: No!

Kenji: (laughing) That's where Wilbur was gonna end up!

Mr. Jin (impressed with Kenji's inferential thinking but keeping the class on track): If we know for sure that the school and the market were not the main setting, what can we guess about the last choice?

Class: It's a farm.

Mr. Jin: Yes, because we knew the answer without looking, it should be a farm. Let's look. (Reveals the third picture.)

Class: It's a farm!

Mr. Jin: What if our last choice was a picture or word we didn't recognize (he replaces the farm with a word written in Chinese), but we knew the other two answers were wrong? Would this be a good guess?

Sara: Yes, I bet that says *farm*!

Mr. Jin: If you guessed this was the right answer because you knew the other two answers were wrong, that would be a good guess. And you are right . . . it does say *farm*!

0

Students are not born savvy test takers. They develop testing competence through ongoing attention to characteristics of question formats they encounter. It is important for students to understand that test taking, just like playing videogames or basketball, requires a set of skills and involves more than subject knowledge—it also requires heightened awareness and practice. A teacher might introduce approaches to multiple-choice testing, for example, at very early levels by using strategies such as those demonstrated by Mr. Jin in the previous scenario. Students who have been exposed early in their education to mediated examples of test-taking strategies in formats that continually adapt to their skills and curricula will, by later years, be able to employ these strategies independently across test-taking contexts.

Teacher-made tests can complement all other forms of assessment, but the development of classroom tests that are appropriate for CLD students requires the careful consideration of several factors. The content tested should, of course, reflect what has been taught and should be probed in the manner best suited for students' demonstration of knowledge. Task analysis skills should be separated into their component parts so that mastery of subskills can be determined. Factual or memorized material can be assessed via formats that have pictures or mastered vocabulary presented in a familiar test design (e.g., matching, multiple choice). The correct answer should be easy to distinguish from incorrect answers, given an understanding of the concepts being measured. Vague or ambiguous prompts are essentially meaningless and sometimes punitive because they tell us only about a student's language and testing finesse rather than the student's content-area comprehension. Assessment in Action 6.1 provides additional guidelines for creating effective prompts/tests.

Although "objective" tests might seem less complicated for CLD students, these learners may actually find it easier to tackle questions that require synthesis, explanation, or analysis through short-answer essays if they are supported with access to graphic organizers and bilingual dictionaries (as applicable). When teachers grade the essays of CLD students, they may choose to focus solely on content rather than incorporating literacy criteria. Alternatively, teachers can provide separate scores for each skill area.

1

Teaching Tips:

Additional tips for developing teacher-made tests (Educational Testing Service, 2003; Missouri National Education Association, 2011; Salend, 2005) include the following:

- Identify the purpose of the test.
- Determine what type of test would be most appropriate based on the material, student variables, and what you want to measure.
- Control the language level of the test unless that is the curricular area being assessed. Avoid ambiguous or vague prompts. Linguistically complex forms (e.g., unless, although), clausal constructions, and negatives often lead to misinterpretation of the question.
- Keep questions short and specific to lessen the impact that differences in reading speed and fluency have on indices of content learning.
- Allow students some choice in selecting the questions they will answer or demonstrating their knowledge/skills (e.g., options for essay questions, choices of the structure/ organization of the response).
- Include questions that reflect varying degrees of complex thought.
- Consider the element of time when developing a test. Inadequate time or time pressure injects several biasing elements into the testing situation that detract from a teacher's ability to distinguish results based on knowledge from those resulting from testing conditions.

Educators who develop effective teacher-made tests remember that it is essential to give students

mediated opportunities to work with these formats so they are better equipped to interpret them in higher-stakes testing situations. Many test-taking skills can be learned while applying similar skills during instruction. For instance, the skills of isolating information, synthesizing, and summarizing that frequently are needed to succeed on tests are best developed during daily instruction. The more students practice these skills in academic contexts, the better prepared they will be for actual tests.

The tips provided in Figure 6.5 offer educators guidance for teaching students how to strategically approach test formats such as multiple-choice, matching, true/false, sentence completion, and essay questions. When sharing these tips with CLD students, however, teachers need to incorporate appropriate examples and scaffolding, depending on the academic and language proficiency levels of their students.

Figure 6.5

Test-Taking Tips for Students

Testing Tips
Multiple Choice • Read the question and think of the answer before reading the response options. • Eliminate choices that are obviously incorrect or unrelated to the content. • Carefully analyze and choose from among the remaining options. • Look for grammatical clues. • If within the first few attempts you are unable to determine the answer, skip the question and return to it later.
Matching • Make sure you know the rules and understand the directions well (e.g., whether items can be used more than once). • Read the first item in column one and then all possible matches before answering. • First answer items that appear less difficult; skip (and note) difficult items to

- First answer items that appear less difficult; skip (and note) difficult items to reconsider when there are fewer possible answers remaining (if one answer per item).
- As you proceed, mark out or highlight choices that have been used to focus your attention on responses remaining for review.

True or False

- Words that qualify statements (such as *rarely, sometimes, most,* and *usually*) are more likely associated with correct answers than words that make the statement 100% true or false (such as *always, never,* and *every*).
- Read each item carefully; mark it false if any part of it is not correct or true.
- Highlight prefixes and negative words, and consider their power to change meaning.

Sentence Completion

- To help determine the answers, convert these items into questions.
- Pay attention to grammatical clues as well as length or number of blanks to identify targeted responses.

Essay

- Highlight key words related to directions (e.g., *explain, compare, describe*).
- Read the question, note important points to address, and outline your response before beginning to write.
- Rephrase the question as the first sentence of the answer, detail your response accordingly with transitions between ideas, and summarize main points in your closing statement(s).
- If you are unable to complete an item fully, note its key points and create an outline.
- Proofread your response for legibility, spelling, grammar, and style.

Source: Based on Salend, S. J. (2005). Creating inclusive class- rooms: Effective and reflective practices for all students (5th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Point-in-Time Assessments

Point-in-time assessments are those quizzes or tests that a teacher employs to gather immediate quantitative feedback about student learning. Often, but not always, such assessments involve the measurement of skills that are acquired hierarchically. Some skills in mathematics, for instance, are acquired in this way. For example, it is important to check the ability of a given student to add single digits before moving on to double digits and regrouping. Spelling tests and vocabulary quizzes are also among the more common point-in-time classroom assessments.

Assessment Freeze Frame 6.3

> Point-in-time assessments are those quizzes or tests that a teacher employs to gather immediate quantitative feedback about student learning.

Many teachers who use ongoing assessments such as portfolios or projects also find value in regular quizzes to check for understanding. Assessments that are capable of measuring incremental progress are especially valuable for CLD students. The teacher can subsequently revise instruction or implement interventions at the most opportune time rather than waiting until the student is significantly behind.

2

More frequent, short tests over specific content can benefit students who struggle to remember vast quantities of information (Salend, 2009a). In addition, providing frequent quizzes requires students to consistently recall information (Paul, 2015). Paul accentuates the importance of this process, explaining that retrieval practice alters our memories, as our brains elaborate and enforce connections that likely will be needed in the future. Such retrieval practice boosts students' retention of the material and supports subsequent recall. The importance of later explaining and discussing the correct answers with students cannot be overemphasized (Paul, 2015).

Students also need supported to develop metacognitive skills related to their study practices. In fact, some teachers regularly build in opportunities after tests/quizzes for students to evaluate what studying practices were most or least effective for them. They also ask students to consider modifications to their studying and commit to trying one or more new strategies the next time they study for an assessment (Lovett, 2013; Millis, 2016).

Assessment in Action 6.1

Creating Prompts for Teacher-Made Tests

The following guidelines ensure that teacher-made tests are accommodative:

1. When creating questions with multiple choice answers, be mindful of students with varying linguistic skills. Carefully design prompts and foils to avoid creating undue advantages or disadvantages for students. For example, although some students may legitimately know the answers to the following fill-in-the-blank questions, others who are not sufficiently familiar with the content material might be cued by grammar structures that indicate the correct answers.

i. _____ eat a variety of vegetation, including tree bark.

a. Moose

b. Walrus

c. Penguin

d. Arctic wolf

ii. A person who explores caves is called a _____.

a. entomologist

b. ethnographer

b. ethnographer

c. agronomist

d. spelunker

2. Consider the range of responses that may be elicited from items. For example, "Tyrannosaurus rex was a _____ ." (Possible responses include dinosaur, meat-eater, GoBot, etc.). Determine whether to accept all logical responses or revise the prompt to probe the targeted content more specifically. For instance, this item can be rewritten, "Tyrannosaurus rex ate only _____ ."

3. Avoid using words such as *always, never, all,* and *none* when designing multiple-choice assessments to gather information about content knowledge. These words tend to favor students with greater linguistic experience.

4. Be mindful of the potential for cultural/regional bias in assessments. Depending on the prompt, descriptors such as "Arctic" in the term "Arctic Wolf" might give undue advantage to students familiar with the region's climate, vegetation, and native animals.

5. In many instances, it is best to have students describe the topic/concept in their own words or create a visual (with labels, as needed) to share their understanding of the concept.

Accommodative Assessment Practices 6.2

On a sentence completion test with picture cues of a cookie, spoon, apple, and cup, Adan circled the cookie as the best response to: "I eat beans with a(n) _____ ." It seems clear to Mr. Rossi that Adan is either unable to read or did not adequately comprehend the prompt, but he's not sure which. Mr. Rossi hoped this format would give him insights into this student's skills but realizes he

won't know much more about Adan's learning if he simply marks the test item wrong. He reads the item again. Perhaps the problem is the preposition *with.* Mr. Rossi had not thought of it when he created the test, but the question could be interpreted as meaning what you eat *along with* your beans, rather than what you use to eat beans. Nevertheless, he thought, it is possible that Adan just couldn't read or understand the words. Mr. Rossi calls Adan to his desk and asks him to read the response to the item aloud. Adan smiles, "I eat beans with a tortilla."

In this case, cultural factors had contributed to Adan's "incorrect" answer. In his family, a tortilla (rather than a spoon or fork) is used to scoop beans from the plate. Given the images provided, Adan's selection of the cookie/tortilla now made perfect sense. Mr. Rossi knows that this student did, in fact, correctly demonstrate the skill being assessed. Based on this experience, Mr. Rossi plans to modify the prompt before using it again. He also is validated about his pedagogical decision to ask students to explain their answers if something seems amiss.

Snapshot from *Classroom Practice* 6.2

In her 3rd-grade classroom, Ms. Farrell uses point-in-time vocabulary quizzes to measure the level of student understanding. To support students' ability to fully demonstrate their knowledge, she provides the translated vocabulary term and asks that the students draw a picture and use the word in a sentence.

Karen Farrell

Ms. Sayles, an 8th-grade teacher, uses an activity called “My Learning in a Box” to ascertain what students have gained from the latest chapter in the book, *To Kill a Mockingbird*. During the activity, students draw visuals in each of the six boxes to summarize their learning and then write the theme of the specific chapter. With this information, she is able to determine the degree to which her students understood the essential message of the text and their levels of readiness for proceeding to the next chapter.

Tyherah Sayles

4

Curriculum-Based Measurement

Another approach to measuring the incremental progress of learners is *curriculum-based measurement* (CBM). Like criterion-referenced tests (which are discussed in a subsequent section of this chapter), teacher-made tests, and point-in-time assessments, CBMs are designed to measure the acquisition of curricular skills directly. Although each of these types of assessment is a form of broader curriculum-based assessment, there are some significant distinctions among them.

To design criterion-referenced and teacher-made tests, long-range objectives are broken down into skills and subskills that are taught and measured sequentially throughout the year. Although it stands to reason that mastery of these distinct hierarchical components will inevitably result in broader core-area knowledge, this cannot always be assumed. For example, a student might be able to demonstrate mastery of addition with and without regrouping during those respective lessons but perform poorly when required to apply those same processes in more global assessments (or when problems requiring these separate processes are presented together) (Fuchs, 2004). Vanderheyden (2005) contrasts this model of *mastery measurement* with *general outcome measurement*.

5

CBMs are best characterized as general outcome measurements. Instead of measuring the mastery of incremental steps to an academic goal, CBMs repeatedly sample global skills from which a growing mastery of subskills can be inferred. This is similar in principle to what is sometimes referred to as informal differentiated assessment but differs in that CBMs can be standardized in their administration for an entire class or group.

In a process described by Hosp and Hosp (2003), a teacher using curriculum-based measurement

first identifies academic goals and objectives the student is expected to master over the course of the school year or semester. The teacher then uses these outcomes to develop minitests called CBM probes, which can be administered at regular intervals throughout the year. CBM probes gauge student progress toward the terminal goal. An advantage to such probes is that teachers can create graphic representations of the data that are easy to maintain and are comprehensible to parents. Using our math example, CBM probes might comprise 25 items that draw on a range of skills expected to be mastered during the year (e.g., one, two, and three place-value addition and subtraction, with and without regrouping). Student progress with subskills and holistic applications will be demonstrated by an increase in the number of correct items or correct steps per item.

A number of studies indicate that CBMs demonstrate good reliability and validity as measures of ongoing student learning (Hosp, Hosp, & Howell 2016; Christ, White, Ardoin, & Eckert, 2013). CBMs also tend to be quality indicators of student performance on certain high-stakes reading assessments (McGlinchey & Hixson, 2004). Additional research is needed, however, in areas related to CLD learners and the contexts of their instruction. It seems reasonable, for example, that CLD students learning to read in their primary language will demonstrate a different slope of skill mastery than those who receive either highly accommodated or essentially unaccommodated instruction that is delivered only in English. CBMs can also be used to determine when students schooled in their first language (L1) have developed sufficient native language skills to support the transition to English academic instruction, and to monitor the progress of CLD students on reintegration or designation into grade-level education classrooms (Harper-Young, 2018).

Because CBMs provide consistent curriculum-based feedback on student progress, these assessments are useful to classroom teachers as they determine the effectiveness of their curriculum-based instructional accommodations for CLD students. Teachers who reflect on and self-monitor their use of CBMs tend to demonstrate a noticeably broader range of instructional modifications than those who do not self-monitor or those who do not use CBMs. Self-monitoring of CBM use has also been correlated with significantly greater student progress (Neuenschwander, Röthlisberger, Cimeli, & Roebers, 2012).

Assessment Freeze Frame 6.4

> Instead of measuring the mastery of incremental steps to an academic goal, CBMs repeatedly sample global skills from which a growing mastery of subskills can be inferred.

6

Self-Assessment

In most classrooms, teachers continue to be primarily responsible for rating and evaluating student work. Traditional grading systems are supported for a variety of reasons, which include simple formats for informing parents and the presumed capacity to motivate students. Grade-oriented learning environments, however, can be detrimental to student learning if the grades are considered as the ultimate goal. When grades are not viewed as another means of finding what students are capable of doing, then we risk students seeing themselves in a particular category of grades (e.g., "I'm a C student."), at which point it tends to be difficult for them to envision a different reality. In grade-oriented classrooms, less attention is typically paid to the process, or construction, of learning than to the result (the quality of which is generally determined by someone other than the learner). For many CLD students, such practices reinforce an external locus of control and further reduce their sense of self-efficacy in learning.

The promise of *self-assessment* extends well beyond the ability to provide information about achievement. Through self-assessment, students are guided to reach deeper levels of personal thinking and learning. The goal for students is to develop metacognitive skills, which enable them to be reflective about their own thinking, and to approach learning with a growth mindset (Zubrzycki, 2015).

Self-evaluation systems engage students in their learning and foster relationships with teachers as mentors and guides rather than as omnipotent evaluators. In our efforts to promote self-assessment in the classroom, it is important to help students gain a clear and precise understanding of the learning objectives and outcomes. Expectations might be explained in the form of rubrics with examples, delineation of specific skills, discussion of criteria, or the ideal of a real-world application. Although it is always important for students to understand how they will be assessed, there is significant data suggesting that practicing self-assessment according to such criteria leads to improved academic learning and performance (Dearnley & Meddings, 2007).

Self-assessment charts or graphs can function in a variety of ways depending on grade level and content. Simple formats, such as the one depicted in Figure 6.6, might involve listing tasks, skill competencies, or knowledge areas along one axis and descriptors of comfort or success along the other. These descriptors might correlate directly with objective indices of mastery, such as percentage correct in multiplication tables (ones, twos, threes, etc.), qualitative terminology (e.g., lost, uncomfortable, getting it, comfortable, super), or pictorial representations (e.g., sad,

confused, curious, or happy faces; red, yellow, or green stoplights) (Wiliam, 2004). Students are taught to plot and recognize their own progress as they assess themselves along targeted parameters of learning. As with other forms of assessment, it is important to emphasize what has been accomplished and to promote the mutual discussion of ways to address what has not. Innovative educators might also elect to model self-assessment of their own learning of curricular material or a recently undertaken hobby.

Figure 6.6

Assessment Artifact: Self-Assessment Rubric

Literature Circle Presentation Preparation **Self-Assessment Rubric**					
Student Name: Title of Book:					
Presentation Preparation Activities	**Please circle the most appropriate response to each statement.** **1 = Never 4 = Frequently** **2 = Rarely 5 = Always** **3 = Sometimes**				
1. I came to group meetings prepared (on time and ready to make an honest effort to understand the material).	1	2	3	4	5
2. I willingly read from the book when it was my turn.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I actively participated in discussions.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I listened attentively while members shared thoughts.	1	2	3	4	5

5. I respected the ideas and opinions of other members.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I helped my group discuss the general questions.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I helped discuss the questions specific to our book.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I identified at least one question that needed to be addressed.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I helped define presentation responsibilities.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I prepared for my presentation responsibilities (gathered materials, rehearsed part, asked for advice when necessary, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
With which group members did you work most effectively?					
Additional Comments:					

Technology can be a great aid for students as they focus on their growth. Technology initiatives and access to computers and tablets have provided teachers with additional means to tailor electronic learning programs according to students' levels and needs. Programs that incorporate data tracking and visual graphs allow students to see how their performance has changed over the course of time. When students complete additional types of assessment, the results can be uploaded on the same devices to provide learners with a cumulative picture of their own performance. Having continuous access to data and associated performance tasks promotes ongoing self-reflection among students related to their learning processes and performances.

8

As one might expect, both teachers and students need targeted support in becoming adept at using self-assessment to advance classroom learning effectively (Brown & Harris, 2014). The format of self-assessment tasks must be developmentally appropriate and geared toward eliciting the kinds of thinking that promote learning and future application of insights gained. Providing opportunities for students to justify their self-evaluation, for example, challenges them to engage in sophisticated thinking about criteria and their own performance (Brown & Harris, 2014). Brown and Harris also make clear that teacher feedback about the results of self-assessments are instrumental to students' growth in their ability to realistically assess their learning efforts.

Accommodative Assessment Practices 6.3

Mr. Piña decided to model self-assessment by using his experiences with playing an accordion. He shares with the class that he has always wanted to learn how to play the accordion and that he recently found one at a garage sale. His 5th-grade class is intrigued by the accordion's buttons and bellows but oddly surprised at Mr. Piña's inability to produce anything that sounds like music. Carla volunteers that her uncle plays the accordion, and he agrees to give Mr. Piña lessons.

Technology-Supported Assessment

Today technology drives our society. In addition to technological applications for everything from household management to entertainment and citizenship (news, consumerism, voting), technology is also uniquely suited to meet some of the critical needs of CLD learners. Carefully chosen technologies can facilitate the CLD student's comprehension and demonstration of content-area learning by providing:

1. Access to native language supports or resources that enhance student comprehension
2. Contextual supports such as pictures, videos, and audio clips, as well as more authentic learning opportunities through simulations and so forth
3. One-on-one instruction that provides immediate feedback at the student's learning level

4. Programmed adjustment of content and complexity that adapts to student responses, scaffolds new knowledge, and engenders a sense of success

5. Added dimensions to cooperative and project-based learning activities, including access to and communication with outside resources

6. Opportunities to access and enhance higher-order thinking skills as the student connects new and prior learning through self-directed inquiry

9

Technological applications can augment our repertoire of performance and project-based assessments, but they also offer a range of modifications to more traditional tests that were not previously possible or practical for the typical teacher. Some programs allow teachers or students to choose the assessment design, modifications, and response format that is most likely to yield valid information about students' abilities in content areas. Options may include audio presentation, verbal or written response, L1 translation, use of bilingual online dictionaries, extended time, and so forth. For many teachers, these modifications are actually easier to provide via technology than through adaptations, materials, or personnel currently available to them on site.

A strength of *technology-supported assessments* is that they can be designed (or purchased with the design) to respond dynamically to the performance patterns of a single student. For example, computer-assisted tests (CATs) are now available to differentially assess students who are performing above or below assigned grade level on their mastery of targeted knowledge and skills. These assessments are structured so that items answered correctly are followed by more complex or difficult prompts, whereas those answered in error lead to more simplified branches of the material or content. This reduces the number of unnecessary items and provides generally equivalent data in far less time. If the overall pool of test items is large, students are unlikely to take the same test twice. Therefore, CATs usually can be readministered more frequently than traditional forms of standardized assessment (Van Horn, 2003).

When considering the use of technology-supported assessments, recommendations (Chien, Wu, & Hsu, 2014; Salend, 2005, 2009b) include:

1. Scrutinize items or the structure of assessments for cultural or linguistic bias.

2. Carefully evaluate tools for language demands that may unfairly affect the CLD student's demonstration of knowledge and skills.

3. Consider student familiarity and comfort with technology in general when determining the appropriateness of use.

4. Think about the extent to which the format precludes accommodations (e.g., highlighting) that may be particularly relevant and useful for the CLD student.

The Internet can also provide innovative opportunities for our work with CLD students and families (Kingsley & Tancock, 2014; Salend, 2005) that include, but certainly are not limited to:

- Ongoing assessment formats such as electronic portfolios and interactive journals
- Teacher-made assessments to be used as self-assessments and point-in-time measures (www.funbrain.com; www.quia.com)

Snapshot from *Classroom Practice* 6.3

Formal Formative Assessment

Formal assessments encompass more than the periodic high-stakes assessments that tend to dominate conversations in staff meetings and lounges. Like informal assessments, formal assessments are tools that teachers can use effectively to gather data about instruction and learning in their classrooms. This data can be used to diagnose learning needs, monitor progress, and provide students and families with timely feedback (Research for Better Teaching, 2016).

Teachers may consider their high-stakes "look-alike" tests as formal formative assessments, but many districts identify formal formative assessments as the centrally developed or adopted tools used as a barometer of student learning across settings such as classes, schools, or districts. Such assessments include (a) norm-referenced or criterion-referenced tests designed for (or permitting) periodic update, (b) formal assessments that accompany a standardized program of

permitting) periodic update; (b) formal assessments that accompany a standardized program of instruction (e.g., Scholastic Reading Inventory [SRI]), (c) assessments that are part of district curricular units, and (d) some assessments that are facilitated by computer (e.g., Advantage Learning, FastBridge Learning: Curriculum Based Measurements, Measures of Academic Progress [MAP], Standardized Testing and Reporting [STAR]).

1

Formal Formative Assessments as Norm-Referenced and Criterion-Referenced Tests

This section of the chapter discusses those formal formative assessments that are specifically applicable to classroom teachers of CLD students. *Norm-referenced tests* and *criterion-referenced tests* are each useful as formal formative assessments. The differences between these two kinds of tests largely reflect their purposes and the way resulting scores are interpreted (Boehm, 1973; Bond, 1996; Brown, 2014). Norm-referenced assessments are designed and used to measure differences among students. Items mastered or failed by a majority are discarded in favor of those deemed most likely to distinguish among test takers. Often this results in a test with fewer, more heavily weighted items per skill. On the other hand, criterion-referenced tests provide information on the acquisition or demonstration of selected components and target instructional skills among students *without* regard to the relationship between one student's performance and the achievement of others.

In general, reliance on tests that sample skills through a limited number of items is less informative to our teaching than is the use of assessments that include multiple opportunities to probe or elicit demonstration of content-area knowledge. If the primary purpose of formative assessment is to enlighten our understanding of how well a student is learning (and how well the teacher is teaching) the targeted material, there may be particular merit in using criterion-referenced rather than norm-referenced assessments of content-area learning. Regardless of the type used, the assessment should measure what we intend to measure and provide reliable information that is useful. Well-designed criterion-referenced tests not only provide formal formative information about student mastery of specified skills but also give us insight into the levels of prerequisite knowledge necessary to perform the tasks.

Assessment Freeze Frame 6.5

> In general, reliance on tests that sample skills through a limited number of items is less informative to our teaching than is the use of assessments that include multiple opportunities

to probe or elicit demonstration of content-area knowledge.

Commercially Produced Assessments

The growing population of CLD students in public schools has resulted in an expanding market for assessment tools that aid our understanding of these students and enhance our ability to assess their learning. Marketed tests or *commercially produced assessments* can be very attractive because the majority offer formative numerical indices of student skills, and some are developed for use in other languages. A sole reliance on such tests in the belief that they allow us to easily identify and address discrete areas of student need can result, however, in inappropriate placement and instructional practices for CLD students. Readers are cautioned to review discussions in Chapter 5 regarding the validity of any "normed" tests for diverse populations. Used wisely, however, some of these tools can indeed provide auxiliary pieces of information that may augment a school's more authentic and dynamic picture of student progress in content-area learning.

The Snapshot Assessment System (Rangel & Bansberg, 1999) is an example of a marketed tool that can be used to ascertain information about the content-area learning of CLD students. It is designed to assess the student's related knowledge in Spanish or English but can be administered as a formal formative assessment by teachers who speak only English. In roughly 20 minutes, reading, writing, science, and math can be sampled sufficiently to obtain an overview of a student's L1 or L2 knowledge and skills in core academic areas. One reason the Snapshot is popular among classroom teachers is that it does not simply compare CLD students with an artificial norm to derive a statistic that does little to inform instruction. Instead, this assessment provides tangible evidence of standards-based skills to aid the teacher in developing appropriate instructional plans (see Chapter 3 for additional details).

2

Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) (Good & Kaminski, 2002) is a reading assessment developed to assess K–6 students on the acquisition of literacy skills. The test is designed to measure the National Reading Panel's Five Big Ideas of early literacy: phonological awareness, alphabetic principle, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. The tests are short (1-minute) assessments that assist teachers in monitoring the development of students' reading skills. As with any assessment, using DIBELS with CLD learners has advantages and disadvantages. Benefits of DIBELS include the following:

- The test is given to individual learners, thereby making it a convenient screener for students' literacy skills.
- The test can be administered quickly.
- The assessment can serve as one tool for data-driven decisions about the needs of students.

Potential drawbacks to DIBELS with CLD students include the following:

- The timed part of the test (5–7 minutes per student) is sometimes not enough to create a true picture of a student's needs.
- The resulting scores on the test often simply do not provide enough information for teachers to determine students' skills fully.
- The pictures used within the test can create cultural bias for students from different cultures.
- English learners may inadvertently be counted off for using their understanding of the sounds in their native language, especially during administration of the Initial Sound Fluency (ISF) subtest.
- The Nonsense Words Fluency (NSF) subtest can be very confusing for English learners who are still in the initial stages of language development.
- Inordinate emphasis might be placed on results, given limitations of the assessment (e.g., limited predictive ability of Grade 1 Letter Naming Fluency (LNF), Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF), and Nonsense Words Fluency (NSF) subtests for students' achievement beyond Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) performance [Goffreda & DiPerna, 2010]).

AIMSweb (2000) is an assessment, reporting, and data management system commonly used in response to intervention (RTI) or tiered instruction (see Chapter 7 for additional details about these types of data-informed programming). AIMSweb provides very brief (most are 1 to 4 minutes) assessments of reading, math, spelling, and writing that can be generalized to overall academic performance and used for screening/benchmarking and progress monitoring. English and Spanish versions are available. AIMSweb includes an ELL Profile that supports educators to:

versions are available. AIMSweb includes an ELL Profile that supports educators to:

- Identify English learners whose academic issues are broader than simply their level of language proficiency
- Establish expectations and goals for individual learners, based on their profiles
- Consider recommendations for instruction and connections to other academic outcomes

The most current version, aimswebPlus (2017), includes tools to screen for dyslexia and behavior/emotional challenges.

3

Interpreting Assessment Results

In all cases, the usefulness of assessment data hinges on our ability to interpret the results knowledgeably. When teachers are familiar with the formats, implications, and limitations of assessments, they can begin to identify factors in results that lead them to further examine the source of the data or individual student variables before determining success or failure of student learning. Questions to consider include the following:

- Where and how is the content of the assessment represented in the school's curriculum?
- Have the skills and concepts assessed been taught in a comprehensible manner?
- Is there classroom evidence of content learning that contradicts the results of the assessment? If so, why do the discrepancies exist?
- Were sufficient assessment accommodations provided to mediate the linguistic complexity of the assessment?
- How might a student's level of acculturation or task familiarity have affected her or his performance on the assessment?

The answers to these questions should prove extremely informative, especially when combined with knowledge of language acquisition processes and an awareness of the sociocultural contexts of the instruction and assessment being examined. Although necessary for accountability and statistical applications, formal assessments can and should coexist effectively with ongoing informal

statistical applications, formal assessments can and should coexist effectively with ongoing informal assessment processes.

Summative Content-Area Assessment

Summative content-area assessments are designed to measure student understanding following a sustained period of instruction or participation in a series of instructional sequences. Since *summative assessments* are higher-stakes than formative assessments, it is critical to ensure that the assessment aligns with the goals and objectives of instruction. As previously noted, the results we gain from formative assessments inform us of our students' strengths, needs, and gaps so that we can accommodate them strategically and consistently. With such support, we increase the likelihood that students will be able to perform on summative assessments in ways that more accurately reflect their individual potentials.

Summative assessments emphasize the level of student mastery attained and the efficacy of instruction or schooling patterns. From a student perspective, summative assessments are about quantifying performance and determining either grades or sufficient performance to pass to the next level of education or career. From an educator perspective, summative assessments can be used to refine instruction but are more often associated with issues of accountability. From a policy perspective, summative assessments of content-area learning are increasingly about politics, accountability, and rationales for funding decisions.

Informal Summative Assessment: Portfolios as Authentic Assessments

Student assessment portfolios can be used for either formative or summative purposes. As Masters (2013) explains, "When assembled over a period of time, portfolios can provide a valid basis for establishing current levels of achievement and for monitoring progress over time" (p. 38). Summative portfolios focus on learning outcomes and provide evidence of the range and extent of a student's skills and knowledge in the content areas. According to Davis and Ponnamperuma (2005), portfolio assessment can be organized to include the following stages:

1. Students collect evidence to demonstrate attainment of learning outcomes.
2. Students reflect on learning.
3. Teachers evaluate evidence.
4. Students defend evidence (especially in the cases of struggling or borderline students).
5. Teachers arrive at the assessment decision.

4

In order for portfolios to best showcase student learning, students and teachers may decide to build a portfolio around a combination of teacher assessments and student self-assessments and products that reflect both the process of learning and final outcomes. This type of portfolio development encourages students to take ownership over their learning, as discussed in Chapter 2. The best competency-based portfolios are developed in this manner and emphasize both the student's self-directedness in skill development and self-assessment and the effectiveness of the teacher's instruction. Because a single item of evidence may be applicable to more than one performance indicator or learning outcome, it is often necessary for the teacher to develop an appropriate cross-referencing system for the student portfolio. In some cases, commentary or a caption may also be needed to explain the relevance of an item of evidence.

Formal Summative Assessment: High-Stakes Tests

Formal summative assessments of content-area learning are increasingly at the heart of school reform and educational funding debates as well as educator accountability arguments. Because the outcomes or results of these assessments have ramifications for the future education, careers, and life paths of students, such assessments are now synonymous with terms such as *high-stakes tests*. Now more than ever, teachers live and breathe the air of high-stakes tests. It permeates their planning, instruction, and relationships with students and their feelings about their careers. In many places, the results of these tests hold stakes that are just as high for teachers as they are for students and schools. This emphasis on scores has actually prompted some teachers to intentionally disregard administration protocol or to directly teach to the test (Goodnough, 1999; "Under pressure," 2010). The more common response, however, is to focus more intensely on skills and drills in preparation for these tests.

Although such a narrow focus of instruction on the content and constructs of the test has some degree of merit, triangulated studies (e.g., Amrein & Berliner, 2002; Volante, 2004) suggest that the possibility of detrimental trade-offs is high, and that such trade-offs often result in reductionist, skills-bound learning; inability of students to demonstrate higher-order thinking; and low student motivation. These effects have been noted by other researchers as well who contest the predictive ability of standardized tests and their power to provide informative data about actual student learning (e.g., Burger & Krueger, 2003).

What, then, can teachers do to promote the success of CLD students on high-stakes tests? First, effective educators recognize the power of both formative and summative assessments to guide them as they facilitate students' construction of knowledge. Second, these teachers strive to:

1. Align their learning goals with state and local standards
2. Define and describe the desired academic outcomes, so that they are transparent for students
3. Ensure the equitable access of *all* students to educational content and learning opportunities
4. Interpret and respond knowledgeably to student learning behaviors in context (which

oftentimes means reevaluating instructional practices)

5. Ensure that students enter testing situations with the tools necessary to reduce their affective filters and maximize their performances (e.g., test-taking strategies and skills, experience with modifications, confidence)

5

Teachers who make these actions part of their daily practices actively promote the classroom engagement and academic success of CLD students. Students who are thus engaged and successful in their learning are, in turn, increasingly self-motivated and prepared to demonstrate their skills and knowledge on high-stakes tests.

The Role of Language in Content-Area Assessment

Mr. Loucks, a 5th-grade teacher, understands the potential benefits of allowing CLD students to use their native language to demonstrate academic capacities. He reflects on his instructional practices to enhance the writing skills of one particular Spanish-speaking student. (For purposes of anonymity, the student's name has been changed to Enrique.)

The practice of having one of my ELL students occasionally complete his Weekend Write-up in Spanish was a highlight for both him and the class. At the beginning Enrique was not a willing writer. When I asked him to write about his weekend, I'd get maybe two or three sentences at best. As time progressed, I realized that Enrique indeed was a fairly fluent writer in Spanish, his L1. Although at first he was hesitant to write in much detail in Spanish, his writing really blossomed when I allowed him to share his writing with the class. Probably the highlight for Enrique and the class was the time I made an overhead transparency of what he was reading and they could follow along. Not only was this an opportunity for my class to realize that it was indeed a gift to be bilingual, but it also helped them realize that there were things they didn't know—like Spanish. Enrique's credibility in the class skyrocketed when he started sharing and claiming his Spanish language, instead of trying to hide it.

As time went on, Enrique's writing continued to flourish. That isn't to say it was perfect. As you can see [referring to a student writing sample] . . . Enrique didn't believe in punctuation. ☺ This was a continual struggle for him. Once he got writing, he wanted to just write, not punctuate. I know he still struggles with this in 6th grade, but at least he was writing. I'd rather allow him to be fluent in writing his L1 than be so preoccupied with the mechanics that he loses his interest in writing.

Enrique was also allowed to write his State Writing Assessment in Spanish. . . . We had already started our first day of prewriting during the State Assessment when Enrique approached me and wanted to know if he could write in Spanish. When I asked him why he wanted to do this, he said it was because he could do a better job in Spanish. Our curriculum director called the . . . [State] Department of Education and was told that as long as there was a qualified scorer available, Enrique could write in Spanish. As you might suspect, Enrique got hammered in Conventions and Fluency, but scored well in Ideas and Content, Organization, and fair in Voice and Word Choice.

Mr. Loucks recognized that his accommodative classroom practices were pivotal in the appropriate assessment of this student. Because he had previously allowed Enrique to write in his native language, Mr. Loucks saw the validity of Enrique's request to complete the state writing assessment in Spanish.

6

Cross-culturally competent teachers such as Mr. Loucks advocate on behalf of CLD students for assessment accommodations that enable these students to best demonstrate their abilities.

Teachers and administrators who share an inclusive vision of student learning understand that the purpose of assessment, at all levels, is to inform and guide the instruction of students. This can occur only when the manner and the content of student instruction and assessment are aligned. Many schools and districts unfortunately opt to "prepare" their CLD students for high-stakes tests in English by denying them appropriately accommodated classroom opportunities to learn. Students are not allowed to demonstrate their learning through the native language or through modified instructional techniques and assessments. These *un*accommodative practices significantly compromise not only the education of CLD students but also the ability of teachers to understand and differentially respond to their learning processes.

Validity issues arise when linguistic and presentation modifications that were not used during instruction are then used to assess CLD learning on high-stakes tests. For example, most schools and districts that attempt to accommodate students' first language needs either use personnel of varying qualifications to provide written or verbal translation or purchase marketed translations of English-based tests. However, simply translating tests from English to the student's native language does not significantly improve performance unless the student actually received instruction in his or her native language. This concern holds true even for tests (e.g., Supera, Logramos, Aprenda, SABE, Woodcock-Muñoz) that are designed for use with specific CLD populations. If students have not been exposed to the content-area curriculum in their native language or do not possess sufficient literacy skills in the native language, the tests will not yield valid results (Abedi, 2001; Abedi, Lord, & Hoffstetter, 1998; August & Hakuta, 1997; Turkan & Oliveri, 2014).

Because a large number of languages spoken by CLD students cannot be supported by existing materials or testing personnel, and because the majority of CLD students in this country receive their academic instruction in English, it becomes more appropriate for many students to be assessed in English, their nondominant language. For others, the decision is systemic rather than individualized. In either case, however, one must thoroughly consider the impact that language may have on a CLD student's capacity to comprehend what is being asked and to demonstrate acquired knowledge by means of language-loaded assessment formats.

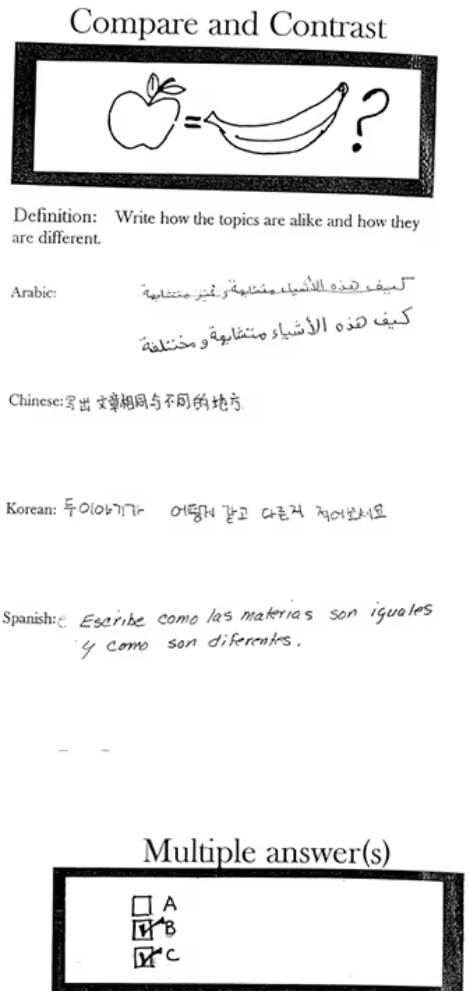
Assessment Freeze Frame 6.6

> Cross-culturally competent teachers advocate on behalf of CLD students for assessment accommodations that enable these students to best demonstrate their abilities.

To reduce test anxiety and provide CLD students with appropriate language support, Mr. Wille synthesized the input of fellow teachers to create a test vocabulary handbook, an excerpt of which is pictured in Figure 6.7. The teachers identified vocabulary terms and phrases frequently found in the instructions of standardized tests. Then they provided an explanation for the testing vocabulary as well as a visual to enhance comprehensibility. The definitions were translated into Arabic, Chinese, Korean, and Spanish. This tool enabled teachers within the school system to use consistent testing language as they prepared students to take standardized assessments. The handbook was beneficial for *all* students because the instructions were simple and precise. The testing language the students used during classroom instruction was the same language they encountered in formal assessment.

Figure 6.7

Assessment Artifact: Test Vocabulary Handbook


Compare and Contrast
Definition: Write how the topics are alike and how they are different.
Arabic:
كيف هذه الأشياء متشابهة و غير متشابهة
كيف هذه الأشياء متشابهة و مختلفة
Chinese: 写出文章相同与不同的地方
Korean: 두이야기가 어떻게 같고 다른지 적어보세요
Spanish: Escribe como las materias son iguales y como son diferentes.
Multiple answer(s)
A
B
C

Definition: More than one answer may be correct.

Arabic: أكثر من جواب واحدة يمكن صح.

Chinese: 正确的答案并不只有一个.

Korean: 답이 하나보다 더많을 수 있습니다
당연히 하나만 있는 것이 아니죠!

Spanish:
Mas que una repuesta puede ser correcto.

Simplify the Math Problem

$$\frac{12\not{0}\not{0}}{15\not{0}\not{0}} = \frac{12}{15} = \frac{2\cdot 6}{3\cdot 5} = \frac{2\cdot 2\cdot \not{3}}{\not{3}\cdot 5} = \frac{4}{5}$$

Definition: Break the problem into smallest, reduced units

Arabic: حل الجواب إلى أصغر جواب ممكن.

Chinese: 写出这个问题最简的形式

Korean: 문제를 풀지마시고 간단하게만드세요
시험 잘보세요 ~! 가장 간단히 만드세요.
불필요 이부분하시고 방정식을 가장 단순하게하세요

Spanish: Reduce el problema en su forma respuesta.

Source: Gale Wille. Reprinted by permission.

8

Bias in Classroom-Based Content-Area Assessments

As she reviewed her students' scores on a district math assessment, a Kansas teacher was mystified about why so many of her CLD students did poorly on a particular item. The question involved having the students calculate how many checkerboards would be needed for a given number of students to play checkers. Students were required to show their work in mathematical and pictorial form. To her surprise, the teacher noted that most of the CLD students depicted three to four students at a game. Although their related calculations were correct, the students' answers were graded as incorrect. According to the teacher:

> **Even though this test question was about something as insignificant as checkers, it served to separate the "haves" from the "have-nots" and the "knows" from the "know-nots," but not in the area of math. To me this is just a tiny example of how entire groups of people can be held back, be it inadvertently or intentionally.**
>
> ***Source*: LuAnna Peck. Reprinted by permission.**

As this example demonstrates, test items that require cultural knowledge as well as content-area knowledge may hinder appropriate interpretation of assessment results. This scenario also illustrates that bias is not always easy to recognize. The absolute certainty with which we contend that our views and experiences are universal becomes especially problematic when we consider issues of assessment.

Although it is a recognized concern that tests designed for large groups of students must be scrutinized in terms of their appropriateness for all students, similar biases may also exist in teacher-made tests. In the following excerpt, Principal Richard Wirtz poses questions as he reflects

teacher-made tests. In the following excerpt, Principal Richard Wirtz poses questions as he reflects on his role as an assessment leader:

> **When assessments are designed to test content or prior knowledge, are they free from cultural bias? Do I plan staff development that considers assessment training? Are examples of test items shared that display test bias and some that don't? Do I outline the requirements that make up quality test items . . . guidelines . . . if you will? Are teachers expected to reflect on questions they should ask themselves before attempting to write test items that display cognitive skills without compromising the background of the student?**
>
> ***Source:*** **Principal Richard Wirtz. Reprinted by permission.**

These are excellent questions. Effective leaders involve staff in ongoing professional development, discussion, and reflection related to assessment. They directly address and share examples of unwitting bias in tests. They recommend guiding questions for teachers to consider as they work to reduce bias in their assessments. It is difficult to produce test items and tasks that are equally free of bias for all students in today's diverse classrooms. However, our objective in all cases is to identify and rectify, to the greatest extent possible, controllable elements of bias in our assessment tools and procedures.

9

In reality, a potential for bias exists in all forms of assessment. In some classes, particular students may be perceived as more capable or diligent based on factors such as race, language proficiency, dialect, affiliations, or the teacher's previous experience with similar or related students. Teachers may inadvertently provide differing amounts of support and feedback during ongoing assessments such as portfolios, or allow unrelated opinions or political concerns to influence their subjective ratings of student work. Differences in language, past experiences (personal and educational), sociocultural precepts, and approaches to novel tasks may continue to obstruct the access of CLD students to the learning goals of traditionally designed projects or multimodal activities (Cramer & Bennett, 2015). Although these types of issues can cloud or corrupt the validity of nonstandardized assessments, the capacity of such assessments to influence student learning positively and contribute significantly to what we know about how students learn compels us to improve our control of bias rather than diminish the role of these valuable tools.

The following questions may help educators identify bias within a variety of assessment tools and approaches (Hamayan & Damico, 1991; Ovando & Combs, 2018):

1. Is the content of the assessment linked to known student experiences?
2. Does the assessment take into account the impact of prior school experiences?
3. Have cultural values and practices (e.g., cooperation versus competition, role of time) been considered for their impact on student responses?
4. Is the task appropriate to the developmental level(s) of the students?
5. Have the language demands of the task been adjusted for the language proficiency level(s) of the students?
6. What are the prerequisite skills or knowledge assumed by the task?
    - Are they related to the target being measured?
    - If not, are they known (not assumed) to be familiar to the students?
7. Are the criteria for responses or goal attainment clearly defined?
8. Are assessment accommodations employed during assessment consistent with those used during content-area instruction?
9. Has the assessment process and product been reviewed by others for sources of potential bias?
10. How has rater and inter-rater reliability been addressed (e.g., "blind" grading and exchanges)?

Some teachers who have begun to embrace the promise of better assessment practices now ask, "Will an increase in authenticity and reduction of bias in assessments result in higher demonstrated achievement of CLD students?" The answer is, "Not necessarily . . . but they certainly can." Because the goal of content-area assessment is to measure academic learning, effective assessment practices simply provide a clearer picture of instructional efficacy with a given student or group. Students who are not receiving accommodative instruction that fosters engaged

of group. Students who are not receiving accommodative instruction that fosters engaged participation in the curriculum will continue to perform poorly. If bias and inequity are not recognized at the instructional level, even the least biased assessments will yield inherently biased results.

Assessment Freeze Frame 6.7

> If bias and inequity are not recognized at the instructional level, even the least biased assessments will yield inherently biased results.

0

Using Content-Based Assessment Information to Inform Instruction

At this point, teachers may be thinking, “Strategies for authentic assessment are all well and good, but what about the grade? How do I determine a grade for CLD students’ content-area learning?” This question is one of the most common asked by educators who must document a letter or percentage grade for all students in the classroom. Ultimately, teachers are responsible for reporting whether a student has met the goals set by the curriculum and guiding standards.

Our education system has a history of limiting teachers’ views of grading and hindering the potential of the reported results to enhance the student’s motivation to engage, aspire, and take risks during learning endeavors. So much is determined by policies that reflect the unquestioned values, norms, and traditions that have been part of school systems for decades. Grading systems were decided long before changing demographics and diversity in classrooms became the norm rather than the exception. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to address the many complexities of fairness issues and the grading policies of school districts across the United States. Instead, the focus of this section is on the need to (1) assess the extent to which students achieved the intended objectives of the lesson/unit/class, and (2) document progress in student motivation, engagement, thinking processes, and social collaboration toward academic achievement and linguistic development.

Effective teachers use assessment results to support future learning and to inform them about appropriate accommodations for the student population served. They move beyond fixating on a grade and the grading system—a system that conveys limited (superficial versus deep) information about the knowledge and skills that were learned and the degree to which they were learned. Rather, reflective teachers are concerned with *understanding* in assessment. Such teachers strive to determine how well students were able to:

- Construct meaning from the unknown

- Incorporate new content and concepts into their preexisting foundations of knowledge
- Build new skills that transcend the content areas
- Collaborate with diverse peers to share, learn, and articulate new information

At first glance, this alternative perspective on appropriate postinstructional assessment may appear to rely on a comparatively subjective foundation. However, this perspective does not eliminate the need to plan for the assignment of a less subjective grade that can be shared with parents and policymakers. Rather, it asks that educators consider ways to provide multiple and varied opportunities for CLD students to enhance their linguistic, academic, cognitive, and sociocultural skills and knowledge *before* using the norms of the grade level to assign a permanent grade. Only through authentic learning experiences and activities, opportunities for student practice, and ongoing process-focused assessments can a teacher appropriately scaffold instruction and provide timely feedback to enhance the product focus of grade-level-appropriate achievement and learning.

As educators embark on the journey toward equitable decisions about grading and the CLD student, they consider the multitude of variables concerning the learner's growth and achievement that might be shared with students, parents, future teachers, and administrators. They also determine the subset of variables they will use to make decisions about the student's grade. The following questions can guide a teacher's decisions about what to include in the final grade for a lesson or unit:

- What are the objectives of this lesson or unit regarding both knowledge (content/concepts) and language (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) skills?
- Will percentage or symbol grades be given to indicate achievement of the selected objectives?
- What are the purposes of the grades or observations that will be recorded?
- In what ways will opportunities for practice and feedback (to assess progress and growth incrementally) be provided?
- Which activities will be assigned a grade for product assessment, and which activities will be used as process assessments to ensure ongoing progress?

- Will there be a homework grade?
- Will there be a cooperative learning grade?
- What checklists, rubrics, or anecdotal notes will be used to document progress and achievement?
- What weight will be given to each piece of the final reported achievement score?

1

The following additional questions can guide decisions about a student's final grade for the instructional term or year:

- What information will be used to calculate the final grade?
- Will the grade be an absolute measure of achievement?
- Will the grade be reflective of linguistic, academic, cognitive, and sociocultural aspects of learning and academic performance?
- Will some aspects of the practice and application be weighted more than others?
- What roles will attitude, motivation, and cooperation play in the final grade?

Among classroom teachers of CLD students, the assignment of final grades should reflect thorough consideration of these and related questions. Above all, teachers should reflect on whether the assessments used, and grades assigned, provide a multifaceted picture of the potential that CLD students are capable of demonstrating.

Programming-Related Issues: Content-Area Assessment

Issues of placement and programming for English learners are topics beyond the scope of this text. Nonetheless, the results of assessing content-area skills and knowledge can aid decision making associated with these issues. The following discussion highlights grade-level issues of content-area assessment that are relevant to the identification, placement, monitoring, and exit of CLD students. This discussion is by no means exhaustive but provides a synopsis of issues that should be considered.

Identification

Ideally, the identification of CLD students for differential instruction is not based solely on a single measure or limited sampling of literacy domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). Within each of these domains are innumerable factors that render otherwise identical scores fundamentally nonequivalent. Many protocols for identifying CLD students who are not yet proficient in English gather little, if any, information about content-area knowledge and skills. However, the determination of whether students have a history of prior L1 education or have been exposed to cognitively rich experiences and conversations in L2 is essential to appropriate placement.

Placement

Creative and individualized placement may be needed for CLD students who would benefit in many ways from a newcomer program but who have skills that would not be capitalized on in this environment. Unfortunately, it is common to discover CLD students placed, for example, in remedial math despite mastery of calculus in a prior country or setting. Teachers are encouraged to discover the facets of each student's learning background that expose strengths or resources that can be drawn on in accommodative classrooms.

Monitoring

Ongoing and varied formative assessments provide teachers with (a) information needed to monitor and document student progress, (b) input for appropriate instructional modifications, (c) indicators that a student may need enhanced levels of differential support, and (d) evidence of a student's readiness for redesignation. Unless teachers monitor to maintain a comprehensible level of rigor in their instruction, students may become so accustomed to added support that they doubt their abilities to be successful on their own. Therefore, attention to student empowerment and confidence are encouraged at all times but become especially important as readiness for exit approaches.

Exit

Student performance on content-area assignments and assessments are part of the body of evidence necessary to consider a student's redesignation from differential programming designed to support English language acquisition. Teachers are encouraged to review multiple sources of data when making recommendations about the best instructional situation for a CLD student. When educators monitor student learning closely in various contexts, it is generally apparent when a CLD student is ready to be exited from a program. Although subjective input from teachers can be extremely valuable to the process, sometimes teachers are either inclined to underestimate student readiness or desire to shield students from the accommodated experience. Such resistance to redesignation without sufficient (especially data-driven) rationales can inhibit educational opportunities and growth potentials among CLD students.

7

Response to Intervention

Response to intervention integrates assessment and intervention within a multilevel prevention system to maximize student achievement and to reduce behavioral problems. With RTI, schools use data to identify students at risk for poor learning outcomes, monitor student progress, provide evidence-based interventions and adjust the intensity and nature of those in terventions depending on a student's responsiveness, and identify students with learning disabilities or other disabilities. (National Center on Response to Intervention, 2010)

Source: **National Center on Response to Intervention (March 2010). Essential Components of RTI – A Closer Look at Response to Intervention.**

Response to intervention (RTI) is a relevant topic of any text that examines the relationship between assessment and instruction. RTI reflects newer perspectives and practices in the way schools identify and respond to students who are not learning as expected within the *core curriculum*, or general instruction provided all students.

Despite these efforts, nationwide data continue to show that far too many capable students are not acquiring the skills necessary for academic success (Aud et al., 2011; IES, 2015). Although some students enter school with a degree of academic disadvantage (Burkam & Lee, 2002; Hart & Risley, 1995, 2005, Weisleder & Fernald, 2013), it benefits educators to examine instances in which exposure to formal instruction *increases* rather than closes the educational gap.

These phenomena are not limited to isolated cases. Indeed, entire groups of students may "fail" when they are provided with poor curriculum or instructional methods. Situations such as these are beyond unfortunate; they violate the educational rights of all students, exceptional and nonexceptional alike. More insidiously, patterns of student (school) failure can reinforce notions that entire groups of students are inherently less capable of learning than others

that entire groups of students are inherently less capable of learning than others.

RTI is a conglomerate of practices based on the alternate premise that most students *do* learn well when provided high-quality instruction and close monitoring of educational progress (Echevarria & Hasbrouck, 2009; Fuchs & Deshler, 2007). *In its ideal*, RTI combines systematic, proactive, and responsive elements to improve patterns of student achievement across entire schools and districts.

RTI approaches encourage examination of both the instructional inputs and achievement outputs associated with individual and group learning within the "core." RTI models require that instruction be (a) evidence-based, (b) delivered with fidelity, and (c) consistently informed by dynamic measures of student progress (Bender & Shores, 2007). Frequent assessments of targeted skills provide teachers the information required for timely instructional adjustments to ensure that all students receive the supports necessary to maximize individual success (Hale et al., 2010). RTI speaks so explicitly to the power of *evidence-based* instruction that RTI was included among the criteria schools may utilize to determine a student's eligibility for special education (reauthorized Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA], 2004). Preventative support structures, such as RTI, along with assurance for supports to meet culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) student needs, also are promoted in the updated Every Student Succeeds Act (2016).

RTI represents an important shift in the requirements necessary to identify and assist students with a possible learning disability. Previous criteria for determining disability focused on finding a significant discrepancy between the student's overall ability (measured IQ) and performance on standardized tests of academic achievement. As discussed throughout this text, however, factors other than an innate disability can contribute to student achievement, and overreliance on discrepancy models is one of the factors frequently associated with disproportionate referral and placement of CLD students in special education (De Valenzuela, Copeland, Qi, & Park, 2006; Rueda & Windmueller, 2006).

In addition to overidentification at the point of evaluation, adherence to discrepancy models can actually prevent struggling students from receiving the support needed to close emergent achievement gaps before they widen. RTI represents a move away from wait-to-fail models that disregard student struggles until gaps become large enough to merit diagnoses as a disability (Fletcher & Vaughn, 2009; Fuchs, Mock, Morgan, & Young, 2003). It has been anticipated that through more rapid response to concerns and eligibility based on student response to research-based methods, fewer students overall will require special education support (Fuchs & Deshler,

2007).

RTI has greater potential to promote systemic improvement than previous models where focus on assessment and placement (in special education) did little to expand teachers' abilities to assess, interpret, and respond to students' learning needs with targeted and timely supports. Whereas test results provide a score, well-implemented interventions facilitate the cycles of learning, assessment, and modification necessary to determine when, how, and *under what conditions* the student *does learn*. RTI models invite us to think as much about the responsiveness of our instruction to the student's learning, as the student's response to our instruction (Hamayan, Marler, Sánchez-López, & Damico, 2014; Hiebert, Stewart, & Uzicanin, 2010). Teachers who begin to problem solve in this manner not only become more adept at distinguishing disabilities from differences in individual students, they often become more capable and responsive teachers of students overall. This is particularly important with CLD students for whom lack of appropriate teaching methods can seriously affect opportunity to learn.

Some districts frame self-assessment, improvement plans, and instructional practices around multitiered *systems of support (MTSS)*. MTSS structures frequently include RTI, but the terms are not synonymous. Both are considered preventative, but MTSS models tend to be more comprehensive, with attention to varied or multiple tiers of instructional support. These support structures may involve nonacademic areas such as social-emotional development and behavior, or system goals (e.g., professional development, learning culture, and parent involvement). Although distinctions exist, the bulk of information and examples in this chapter applies to the data we employ to assess—and assess within—either of these proactive/responsive systems of supports.

Assessment Freeze Frame 7.1

> Whereas test results provide a score, well-implemented interventions facilitate the cycles of learning, assessment, and modification necessary to determine when, how, and *under what conditions* the student *does learn*.

What Does RTI Look Like?

Well-designed RTI models include a number of components that enable and support student learning. Central to each is the assurance of high-quality classroom instruction, delivered with

learning. Central to each is the assurance of high-quality classroom instruction, delivered with fidelity by collaborative and knowledgeable staff who involve parents in supporting the child's educational experience. Students' progress is monitored closely via universal screenings and data derived from student responses to targeted intervention.

RTI models commonly reference a triangular pyramid of tiered supports. Most models delineate three or four tiers, with the largest or core level representing the effective educational practices provided to *all* students. The premise and promise of RTI is that a well-implemented instructional core successfully meets the needs of 70% to 80% of students across settings and populations. When fewer students demonstrate expected growth within the core, schools should examine the following:

- Scope and coherence of curricular content
- Appropriateness of the instructional methods
- Fidelity of implementation
- Validity of data for CLD students
- Correspondence with more authentic or alternate demonstration of skills

9

Because the proportion of students with innate learning disabilities is generally similar regardless of demographic, it is reasonable to expect that the majority of students, regardless of background, will experience success within a *relevant* and *responsive* core.

RTI structures differ among states, cities, and districts. There are two major types of RTI models, employed either separately or in tandem within a framework of supports. The first is referred to as a *standard treatment protocol*. Within this model, the same research-based treatment is provided to all students at each level, with progress measured against set indicators or benchmarks of achievement. Students who do not meet these criteria receive an additional research-supported treatment of more intensive supports. Literacy models that track student achievement using benchmark and progress monitoring systems, such as AIMSWeb (Pearson) and DIBELS or IDEL (University of Oregon), are examples of standard treatment protocols commonly used in schools today.

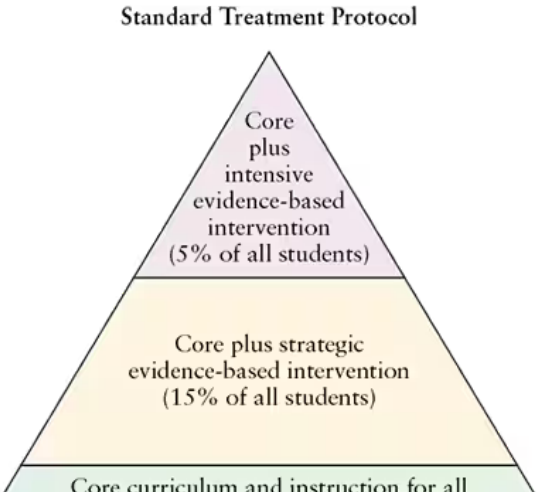
Although the models are not mutually exclusive, the *problem-solving model* differs from the

Although the models are not mutually exclusive, the *problem solving model* differs from the standard treatment protocol in several respects. Chief among these is that problem-solving models focus on more individualized interventions and contextually based assessment. Methods outlined for problem solving foster detailed consideration of the experiential or external factors that may be influencing a specific student's achievement (Hamayan et al., 2014). Individualized interventions that prove effective for numerous students may then become incorporated into the core as levels of necessary differentiation for all, rather than as indicators of individual need.

In discussing problem-solving and standard treatment models of RTI, Catherine Collier (2010) notes that the graphics used to describe them (see Figure 7.1 for examples) lend insight to potential weakness or cautions of each. In the multitiered models, student movement between tiers may be based upon universal or larger scale criteria that are not appropriate for CLD students. Although placement within the tiers is ideally fluid (students return to core settings once skill-specific needs are met), the potential exists for the ascending tiers to be misinterpreted as unidirectional steps toward special education.

Figure 7.1

Models of RTI


Standard Treatment Protocol
Core plus intensive evidence-based intervention (5% of all students)
Core plus strategic evidence-based intervention (15% of all students)
Core curriculum and instruction for all

1

Tiers (Not Tracks) of Instruction

Consideration of the appropriateness of a measure for students became the topic for prekindergarten teachers attending a workshop about the new *universal screener* for use in their school.

Mr. Mantri: Well, I think I understand the intention and, yes, it makes a lot of sense to find out early which students need more help than others, but . . .

Ms. Ordaz: Will paraprofessional allocations and class size be adjusted for classes with more low students?

Ms. Lowell: I don't consider my students "low," but I do worry that a lot of their scores will be. Many of them have never even been exposed to the pictured items they'll be asked to quickly name. Others could easily do that task in their home language—but not in English.

Mr. Mantri: That's what bothers me, too. I understand that rapid automatic naming predicts reading success and it's important to have an early indicator of who may need more attention. But for many of our students, this screener won't be measuring how quickly students can name pictures. It will be measuring their exposure to English.

Ms. Ordaz: Isn't English vocabulary necessary for reading in English? It seems to me that regardless of why they have trouble, it will show us which ones need more help for whatever reason.

Mr. Mantri: What happens if 75% of our students don't make benchmark? Will this screener tell us who needs *which kind* of help?

The teachers in the vignette are asking excellent questions. As mentioned in Chapter 2, it's just as important to understand the reliability and validity of screening tools as diagnostic measures.

Take a few minutes to think about (or discuss) the following:

Take a few minutes to think about (or discuss) the following:

- Is the picture-naming task a *reliable* measure of students' ability to name pictures in English? (In other words, does it accurately portray the student's ability to name specific *English* words?)
- Is it a *valid* measure of rapid automatic naming? (Does the task distinguish between students who score poorly due to word retrieval and those who simply do not yet know the words?)
- What might it indicate if 75% of Mr. Mantri's class does fail to meet the fall benchmark? Will we be able to answer this question on the basis of screening data alone?

Typically, Tier I of a standard treatment protocol refers to the general or core instruction available to all students. At this level, evidence-based practices and quality resources combine to meet the academic and behavioral needs of *most* students. Of key importance for educators of CLD students is whether the instructional and assessment methods used for RTI are research-based as effective and appropriate for students of all demographics in that setting (Sanford, Brown & Turner, 2012). Attention to appropriateness for CLD students is critical given the (a) predominance of instructional practices touted as research-based for all students that have not specifically been determined as effective for English learners, (b) biased methods used to assess skills, and (c) dissimilarity of peers to which they are compared (Brown, 2013; Brown & Doolittle, 2008; Klingner, Hoover, & Baca, 2008; Reynolds & Shaywitz, 2009). Where such assurances have not been examined and/or cannot be made, RTI runs the risk of misidentifying students by the same faulty criteria as the discrepancy formula it seeks to replace (Reynolds & Shaywitz, 2009).

2

RTI models reflect the realization that *some* students may require more intensive support to make expected gains in particular areas. It is important, however, for schools to understand the variables that can influence student performance on screenings, and consider alternate probes and core-level accommodations before referral to more intensive tiers of support.

Teaching Tips:

- Review screening data from the teacher's lens.
  - Do the results reflect the student's performance on formal and informal classroom

tasks?

- Do observations by any other staff indicate the student demonstrates targeted skills under differing conditions?

- Review screening results with the child in mind.
  - Does this student *typically* perform well under the conditions in which the skill was screened?
  - Do anecdotal notes indicate the student was unwell or under stress at the time of screening?
- Identify other sources of data that exist or can be gathered to corroborate the student's need for additional support with specified skills.
- Determine scaffolds that will support this student's ongoing participation in a differentiated core.
- Monitor look-alike or alternate indicators of data that demonstrate student growth with the targeted skill.
- Advocate for multidimensional sources of data when identifying the most beneficial settings to advance student skills.

The goal is to ensure that each student is allowed to engage in the core setting for the maximum time possible, while still meeting his or her individual needs. Indeed, recent research has found that among students with similar academic profiles, those who remained in the core setting made greater progress than those receiving the designated intervention (Balu et al., 2015). Further research is needed to understand what's happening when additional "help" serves to hinder rather than strengthen achievement.

Typically, students identified as making insufficient progress within a well-designed and well-implemented core are referred for more targeted levels of instruction in specific areas of need. At any given time, 15% to 20% of students may require Tier II supports for some aspect of the curriculum while continuing to participate in the universal core. An often-cited benefit of Tier II interventions is that they typically are provided in smaller group settings. Each student's progress is monitored more frequently, with probes administered every 1 to 2 weeks. Data points plotted to determine students' rate of growth reveal their response to the intervention. Because student

determine students' rate of growth reveal their response to the intervention. Poor student responses require reassessment of the intervention and a refinement of the methods used with an individual or group of students. Just as with the core, instructional techniques utilized in Tier II need to be effective for the intended group(s) of students, delivered with fidelity, and *responsive* to the learner(s) for whom it is designed.

For many students, early attention to specific needs results in a resolution of difficulties such that they can continue successful participation in an enriching core with minimal additional supports. Student participation in either tier of support is understood to be need-specific and fluid—never a form of (re)designation or tracking. This labeling/tracking may occur overtly, through assignment to leveled classes, or through the more insidious use of scoring terminology to describe a student or group (e.g., "She's below basic," "Most of my class is red").

3

Snapshot from *Classroom Practice* 7.1

In this picture, Mrs. Thomas is working with a small group of 2nd-grade students to provide them with added support during their reading time. This kind of a guided intervention enables teachers to provide targeted instruction that is responsive to students' individual academic needs.

Jessica Thomas

Voices *from the* Field 7.1

Two years ago, our building switched to a push-in intervention model. We saw huge success with this change and I believe a large part of that success was due to the fact that reading intervention became a part of the homeroom class. Classrooms were no longer a revolving door of students

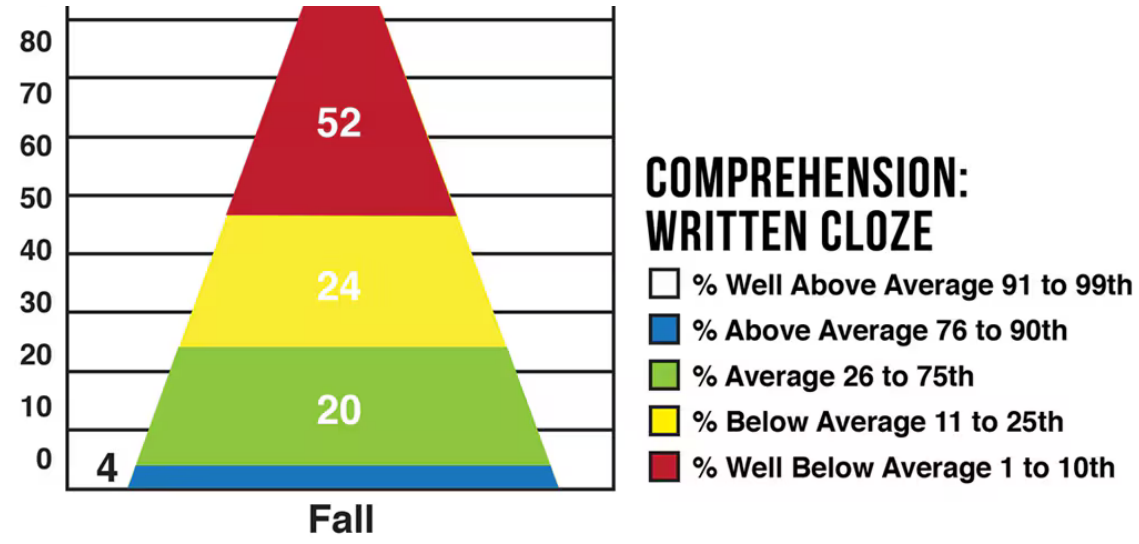
Bringing Focus to the "Data Daze"

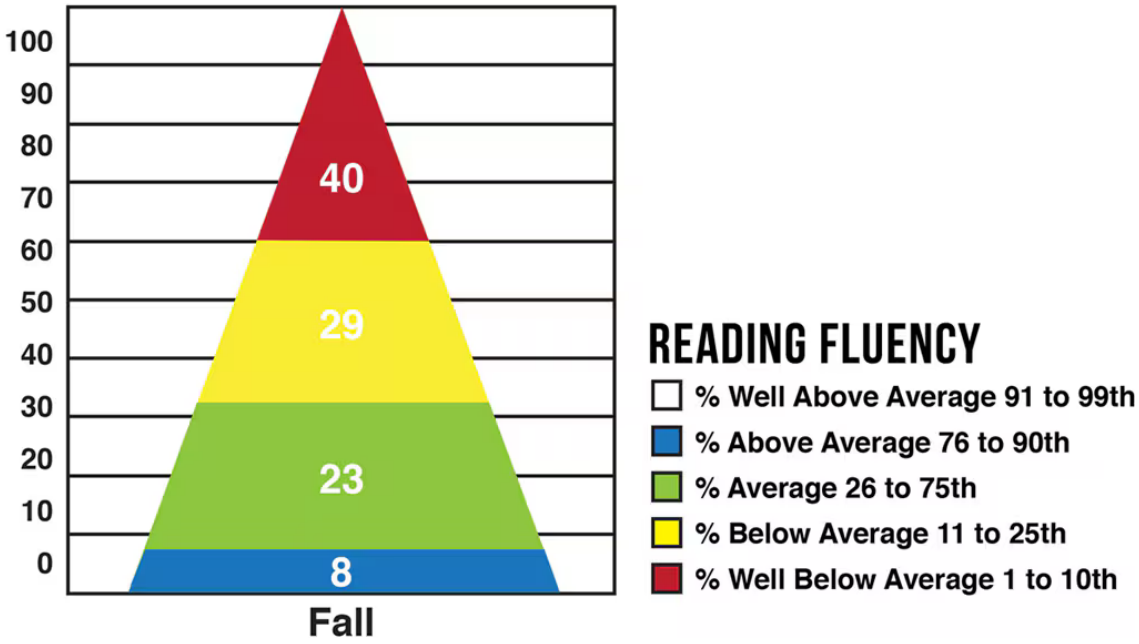
The new principal at Roosevelt Elementary, Ms. Drake, was surprised by how many teachers described their students, and the school in general, as "low." This was done in a manner that suggested inherent ability, rather than specifically defined need or skill. To be honest, fall screening data was alarming. Per protocol, Ms. Drake was now required to help staff "drill down" on those multicolored graphs.

Slides presented during this Data Day's meeting confirmed that Roosevelt's reading triangles were indeed "upside down" (see Figure 7.2). This meant that the majority of students scored in red or yellow, with fewer scoring in the green. There was no perceptible cohort scoring "well above."

Figure 7.2

Reading Data





Despite having had time to reflect, Mrs. Ryan blurted, "That's just Roosevelt. We do the best we can with what we get. Have you seen the neighborhood?" Heads nodded. Another person added, "What if the red kids got extra vocabulary homework or we use their recess time for fluency drills?" Mrs. Ryan countered, "I've been here 20 years and it just feels like we're working harder and cramming more into each day, but little changes." Ms. Drake realized this may be a systemic challenge, and likely the reason she was assigned to Roosevelt. What an opportunity to make a difference! She truly believed most people do strive to feel successful, but numbers alone couldn't tell any of them why they weren't achieving desired outcomes at their school.

In addition to screening, there also were demographic data. When Ms. Drake asked about the percentage of students in special education, teachers shared that this had become a district concern, and "now nobody can be referred." Ms. Drake reassured staff that problem solving around student needs actually was *not* a special education process. There may be students whose needs lead to that consideration, but their first step would be "looking beyond these darn triangles!"

Out of the corner of her eye, she caught another teacher's eyes roll and declared, "Let's stop talking and do some walking." Ms. Drake asked teachers to submit the names of students who may benefit from further attention. She clarified, "These should be students whose needs aren't being met in the accommodated tiers. These are students who stand out, even when provided extra support."

By week's end, 4th-grade teachers had submitted more names than 1st-grade through 3rd-grade teachers combined, so they would be the 1st grade-level group to meet. There were far too many referrals to represent exceptionality or to explore each in-depth. However, every child's success mattered, so they would be trying a new approach. Ms. Drake also invited the ESL teacher, counselor, learning coach, and speech pathologist to this grade-level, problem-solving meeting. They would have 1 hour.

Ms. Drake had prepared a few slides to keep the conversation moving. The first was a photo of nurse Jen's office on a typical busy day. More than 80% of her visitors return to class after a short assessment (e.g., temperature reading, sugar level reading, observation) and the indicated "treatment" (e.g., medication, water, listening ear). "Why is the student returning to the classroom important?" Ms. Drake asked. "Students need to be in class to learn," Ms. El-Amin chimed. "Exactly," the principal replied. "It's like our model of MTSS. There are really only a few students who need something very different, but we don't ignore the rest."

To start the problem-solving process, classroom teachers were given a few minutes to jot down up to three primary concerns they had for each student they had come to discuss. Examples were provided regarding the level of detail for this step (e.g., "Sara has trouble answering questions about stories" is more informative than "Sara doesn't understand").

As teachers read aloud concerns, teammates probed details such as, "Were these student-read stories, or does that also happen after hearing *you* read?" This helped the group reach consensus on how to list the emerging themes. For example, Sara's name was added to those of Ian, Josue

on how to list the emerging themes. For example, Sara's name was added to those of Ian, Josue, Carmen, Jamari, Stephanie, Ixchel, and Kendra on the chart labeled, "Answering Questions after Listening." There was an even longer list for "Answering Questions after Reading," with many of the same names appearing on it. Two teachers commented that they were not sure if those who couldn't respond to reading prompts might have done better orally, so they made a note to follow-up with informal probes to find out. Mr. Vu had a great resource with scaffolded tasks that he was willing to share. All agreed that seeing how each student performed with different response options would add a lot to their understanding of who needed what, and even more importantly, who already *knows* and *can do* when provided an alternate probe.

Another theme emerged that reflected concerns such as, "I never hear him speak," "She doesn't use complete sentences," and "They just don't respond. Crickets!" By the 30-minute mark, chart paper lists revealed common themes around "Speaking in Sentences," "Answering Questions," and "Retelling Stories or Events." Everyone noted the connection to *oral language*, which could also, of course, impact *fluency, vocabulary*, and *comprehension*. Two charts had only one name. The speech language pathologist and counselor would be following up in advance of more individualized problem solving related to those concerns.

Returning to the emergent themes, Ms. Drake drew a frame around each titled skill. She asked the group to reflect on current practices, resources, or routines. Acknowledging full plates and wariness to add-ons, she asked, "Are there any tweaks that could be done to get more power, more language use, and growth from what we *already do*?" They took a few minutes to note individual thoughts before sharing. The ESL teacher opened by saying, "Perhaps this is my lens, but I feel like classes are too quiet. The scripted response drills we've adopted to increase engagement . . . well, it's not the same. How many of you studied a foreign language in high school, aced every pattern drill, but never learned to speak?"

"I agree," said Mr. Vu, "language, words, and sentence structures don't really 'stick' until you're using them for a real purpose. This could be asking your question, sharing your thoughts, or simply requesting that your steak be 'just the right amount of pink.'" Others laughed and nodded. Ms. Drake summarized, "Do we believe that increasing the students' opportunities to talk, to truly converse, has value?" "Yes," said Mr. DeJong, "but I don't know what that would look like without losing control, or having it look to others that way. Previous principals frowned on noisy classrooms."

"Well, if that noise is students talking about what they're thinking, learning, or creating," said Ms.

Drake, "I've got your back. My role is to advocate for what *we* collectively decide has the most leverage with *our* students. That will be our focus. Let's plan to meet again next week. In the meantime, write down any ideas or strategies you feel might add power, not work, to our day. This could include how to rethink a particular structure, like what happens during partner shares, or a simple prompt we all can use to cue higher level or more elaborate responses throughout the day—even in gym. Send your thoughts to Gayle. She'll compile them for discussion next week. We'll decide what is doable and how we'll know it is working. We are not ignoring 'the triangles,' but that data alone couldn't guide us to the discussion that we had today."

The meeting adjourned with 5 minutes to spare. Mrs. Ryan lagged behind. "You know, Ms. Drake, when we started today, I thought this would be a waste of time. That's what I used to feel whenever the outcome wasn't testing for special ed. We didn't know what else to do. Today we turned our resignation about student needs to a focus on how we can add traction to what we already do, instead of just spinning our wheels. Is this what you meant by 'accommodated tiers?'" "That's precisely it," Ms. Drake answered with a smile.

6

Grade- or subject-level problem solving may be most appropriate when many students demonstrate difficulties within an RTI/MTSS framework. Instead of negating concerns as "typical," educators are encouraged to notice themes that emerge from descriptions of actual students. This will foster more authentic and focused discussions around proactive adjustments that presume everyone's *ability* rather than *inability* to succeed. This process also helps to focus resources on gathering the information necessary to problem solve around the strengths and needs of individual students who stand out from their peers. The following process outlines the steps for group problem solving.

7

Group Problem Solving

Materials:

- Lists from teachers (see "Before Meeting")
- Chart paper (or documents to project)
- Markers

- Blank paper (for teachers to make notes)

Directions:

1. **Before Meeting**

    - Identify the grade or subject level with a high rate of special education or problem-solving referrals.
    - Invite teacher representatives and support personnel with insight to, and impact upon, that group.
    - Ask teachers to bring a list of students they either referred, or feel are not benefitting from current supports.

2. **During Meeting**

    - Set up chart paper or projected document for lists that will be developed.
    - Explain time limit and purpose (i.e., to determine if themes emerge from discussion of individual needs).
    - Have teachers write down one to three concerns for each student they have come to discuss.
    - As each teacher shares, invite clarification and consensus about how that student's concern is described and/or whether it is already represented on an existing chart.
    - When all individuals have shared, invite individual reflection on any emergent themes.
    - Share thoughts. Seek consensus on one or two themes.
    - Ask participants now to reflect on current supports, routines, or practices. What

- Ask participants how to reflect on current supports, routines, or practices. What adjustments might leverage greater opportunity to authentically use or develop skills?

3. **Follow-Up**

- The facilitator, coach, or team leader consolidates ideas for follow-up discussion. Teachers determine adjustments or suggestions they feel will add power to every child's day.
- As a group, answers are developed in response to the following questions:
    - Is professional development desired?
    - How and when will we reflect on or measure the impact?
    - Might this professional development or instructional change benefit other grades or teams?
- Continue individualized problem solving around the more unique needs of students that also surfaced during this process.

8

Additional Notes:

This activity can be repeated as often as desired throughout the academic school year. For actions taken, follow-up within the first 6 to 9 weeks is needed to gauge implementation and allow for reflection.

As noted earlier, such problem-solving approaches can exist within or in addition to the standard treatment protocol to assist staff in identifying and responding to individual needs. These processes can also result in instructional insights that improve the core, thereby reducing the numbers of students who fail screeners for reasons unrelated to true ability or skill (Hamayan et al., 2014).

Individualizing for CLD Students

Within weeks of beginning 1st grade, Joaquin was referred for intensive literacy support. Teachers understood that family mobility and emotional upheavals had interfered with his participation in kindergarten, but things had stabilized and he'd become "no different than others" by midyear. Still, he failed to master all letter sounds by May and remained behind peers when school resumed. Tiered literacy interventions (e.g., scripted small-group instruction, drills) and "visuals" (i.e., marketed letter/picture charts) did not result in the rate of growth necessary to close his emerging achievement gap. Teachers began to suspect "processing" or "memory problems."

Staff at Joaquin's school had recently received training on "MTSS for Individual Students." Although designed to replace the *preassessment* process for special education (SPED), district presenters emphasized that an individualized problem-solving approach was different. It should not be considered the "road to SPED" but rather a process to determine the conditions under which the student (and teacher) experience greater success. As such, the teachers of any student, even a student already receiving special services, could benefit from this process when needed.

In the past, Joaquin's teacher would have struggled with referral. She didn't want

In the past, Joaquin's teacher would have struggled with referral. She didn't want to overidentify CLD students, but what if Joaquin had a true exceptionality? Wouldn't ignoring it be just as bad? She decided to submit his name for the problem-solving process (PSP). Prior to the meeting, one of the child study team members visited to gather details. They talked briefly about Joaquin's strengths, needs, interests, and family. How did his parent describe him? The newly created PSP form requested much more personal (biographical) information about the student. There also was a place for individual and contextualizing group screener data.

The first PSP meeting about Joaquin included several Child Study Team members, the ESOL teacher, administrator, and after-school supervisor, Mr. Aragon. He also saw Joaquin daily and had a good relationship with his mother. The PSP form was prefilled with available background information and projected on the wall. They showed Joaquin's school picture while talking about his interests and family. Mr. Aragon added that Joaquin loved having "fun homework" (e.g., coloring or counting page), but his mother had expressed worry that, speaking little English, she couldn't be of much help with his reading.

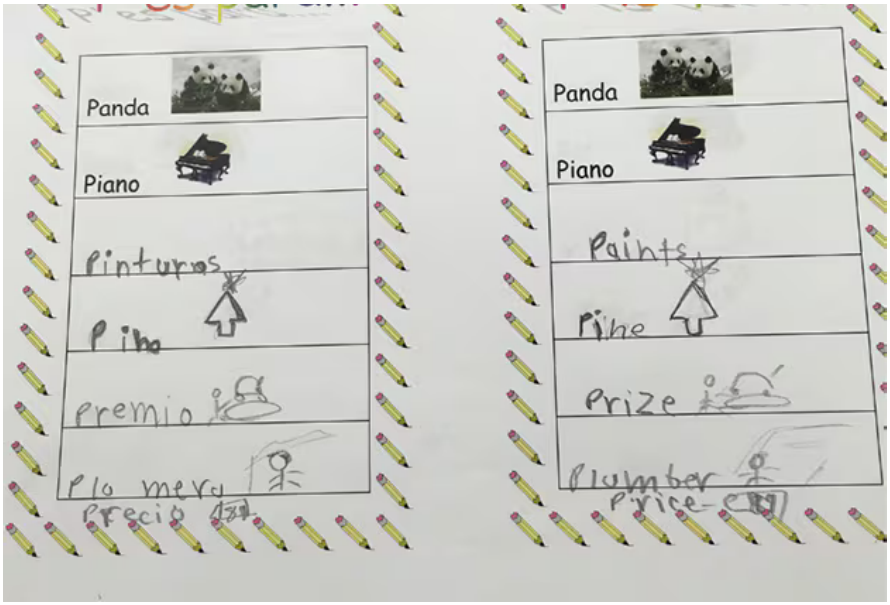
The bilingual speech language pathologist (SLP) often tried to observe students coming up for PSP discussion. Visiting class, she involved Joaquin in a short game with peers that revealed he could name far fewer pictures in English than in Spanish. This suggested that English proficiency factored in his ability to benefit from the picture accommodation assumed to cue his association of letters with sounds. These new insights inspired the PSP team to develop more refined interventions targeted specifically to Joaquin.

The first intervention involved sending home a small packet of sticky notes preprinted with multiples of several unmastered graphemes. Parents were asked to lead Joaquin on a hunt around the house modeling the sound and placing sticky notes on objects determined to begin with that sound. They stuck a printed "p" to the door (*puerta*), a container for straws (*popotes*), and a shelf for plates (*platos*). They added "s" stickies to the chair (*silla*), couch (*sofa*), and salt (*sal*). They placed "m" stickies on the table (*mesa*), jam (*mermelada*), and even one on the sleeve (*manga*) of Mami! Joaquin found it great fun to review and add letters daily. His mother made it even more fun by hiding a candy next to "something that begins with 'ssss,' 'mmm,' or 'p.'" When this skill was probed in class 4 days later, Joaquin demonstrated 100% visual recognition and sound association for the letter/sounds worked on that week.

Joaquin's rapid learning under these conditions led the SLP to also provide parents a bilingual alphabet book to record pictures (drawn or cut out) and Spanish words beginning with the sound associated with each letter (see Figure 7.3). Pages were divided into two columns, one for home words and the other for English words. Parents were encouraged to help Joaquin discover when English letter sounds (i.e., *z*) did not exist in Spanish words. Where possible, spaces in both columns were prefilled with pictured cognates (*pantalones*/*pants*) to provide student and teacher shared referents to anchor letter-sound associations.

Figure 7.3

Assessment Artifact: Bilingual Alphabet Book



Templates for alphabet book pages can take many forms. Teachers can prefill with example cognates to help anchor students' and parents' understanding of the task. In this artifact, the teacher prefilled with the words "Panda" and "Piano" and provided an accompanying image for each.

Source: Maria Moran. Reprinted by permission.

Use of this tool to build sound/symbol association and phonemic awareness (sound discrimination, blending, etc.) was modeled by the SLP. Telephone support was provided daily the first week.

Although given 4 weeks to complete home sections, Joaquin returned his book in two. The teacher was thrilled. She reported back to his PSP team that she and Joaquin had reviewed the letters, sounds, and corresponding Spanish words for the class. Peers loved listening for the sound in unfamiliar words and suggesting English words he could choose for the other column. Within a few short weeks of probing and responding to Joaquin's skills, it became apparent that his needs were largely situational and his assets were immense. When provided with this more targeted and authentic scaffold, Joaquin made rapid gains.

The teacher determined that *all* her students could benefit from what was originally developed to meet the almost unrecognized needs of *one*. She looked forward to adding more student-created bilingual ABC books to sit among the reference shelf materials in her classroom.

o

As this scenario demonstrates, educators frequently can increase the academic achievement of CLD students simply by carefully observing for, and building on, the skills and resources each already brings to class. The multitude of factors surrounding the learning of CLD students requires educators to think reflectively about the root issues of any perceived delays in learning.

As teachers explore a CLD student's history, the following questions may yield information that proves particularly relevant to the problem-solving process:

- *How is the "behavior" or perceived "delay" exhibited in the primary language or home environment?* In general, genuine behavioral, language, and some learning disabilities are also evident to family members, who note differences in this child compared with her or his siblings and peers. When parents or guardians are consulted (e.g., through home visits), they often provide wonderful insights into their child's learning patterns, knowledge bases, and background experiences. Such insights greatly enhance a teacher's capacity to check potentially inaccurate assumptions about learning and language acquisition capacities.

- *Is English achievement at an expected level given the student's stage of English acquisition?* A student's ability to participate in and benefit from instruction is invariably affected by his or her proficiency in the language of instruction, especially if accommodations are not consistently used to increase content comprehensibility.

- *Does the student's language acquisition history appear to account for strengths or weaknesses in the primary language?* If a student's opportunities to use and maintain her or his first language have diminished due to English exposure, she or he may experience some degree of first language loss before fully acquiring the second language. When such a student is assessed in both languages, neither language may appear strong, and this can be misinterpreted as an indication of an innate language delay or a learning disorder.

- *Is L1 achievement consistent with the amount and time period of L1 academic instruction?* Careful consideration of the amount and type of native language instruction is necessary to determine whether the student's current learning patterns are consistent with prior academic experiences.

- *How does the student respond to scaffolded or mediated learning?* One of the most critical sources of information is anecdotal and product evidence of how the student responds to sheltered or other forms of accommodative classroom instruction provided at a level consistent with the student's previous academic and linguistic experiences. CLD

level consistent with the student's previous academic and linguistic experiences. CLD students who demonstrate grade-level or expected learning under these conditions may indeed have significant academic needs but are unlikely to have a learning disability. Many students, however, have not been given an opportunity to learn and benefit from sheltered or accommodative instruction. When such needs-based instruction has not yet been attempted, teachers and other educators must carefully guard against erroneous assumptions about the students' learning capacities.

- *Is the team that facilitates interpretation and processing of provided information, made up of or informed by diverse individuals, parents or guardians, and family and community members who understand the student's language and culture?* Multiple lenses are needed to consider the student's strengths and potential challenges under differing educational conditions. The home perspective is especially critical for insights to the most authentic interpretation of factors that hinder or enable learning performance.

2

A well-developed problem-solving process that includes consideration of these questions may reveal that a student's current difficulties can reasonably be explained or accounted for on the basis of her or his prior opportunities to learn.

Intensified Needs (Few of the Few)

Although the majority of students' needs can be met within Tiers I and II, a relative *few* (3% to 5%) may require even more intensive levels of support to show gains. At this level, intervention support is delivered to even smaller groups with more frequent probes of progress. The purpose of these assessments is to ensure that the instructional methods and materials align with students' needs. Nothing is gained educationally by merely documenting interventions that don't work.

Accommodative Assessment Practices 7.1

Throughout a child's journey through the educational system, various data are collected as a means of shedding light on his or her aptitude, progress, and potential. But what is *data* and how does it relate to what we want to know about the child? Data is simply information. It can take many forms (e.g., observation), but it often is reduced to numbers for easier management. Numbers, however, don't always tell enough of the story.

For example, how long can a person tolerate sun exposure without getting sunburned? This question presumes a lot but most adults could probably provide an answer based on experiences from their own lives. Let's say we ask 100 people this question and their responses range from 15 minutes to 4 hours. Granted, a few might say they "always" or "never" burn, but those are considered outliers; as a result, we exclude them from the study.

If the amount of time this *normative* sample can be in the sun without burning averages 90 minutes, can we be confident this is an appropriate benchmark for all? Will any be "burned" by this

assumption? Might reactions also vary by time of year or geographic location? What other factors could impact an individual's response to sun?

As with skin reactions to the sun, RTI measures are best considered within an individualized context. Whenever we drill down on static indicators such as numerical data, we run the risk of missing critical interactions and insight to the big picture.

Multiple lenses are necessary to bring into focus a larger systemic picture, or bigger picture of any one child. If we consider the four dimensions of the learner's biography, key factors to consider include:

Sociocultural Dimension

- Internal or situational stressors
- Parental involvement in problem solving
- Classroom climate (collaborative vs. competitive)

Cognitive

- Background knowledge (home, community, and school)
- Enrichment vs. remediation
- Varied ways to show learning

Academic

- Prior education
- L1 instructional support
- Instructional approach

- Skills present in home/community contexts

Linguistic

- L1 proficiency level
- English proficiency level
- Adequacy of language accommodations
- Opportunities to access all language assets while learning

RTI models vary somewhat with regard to the most intensive tier(s) of instruction. It may be that Tier III includes both students without disabilities and those with special needs, or Tier III (or IV) may be reserved only for students with identified exceptionalities. Special education students should be assigned to the most appropriate and least restrictive tier of instruction for each curricular area based on individual need rather than on predetermined influence of (dis)ability. Although a well-designed model of RTI leads to more appropriate determination of students in need of intensive supports, RTI is, above all, a continuum of general education supports designed to *prevent* school failure in the larger population of students.

Assessment Freeze Frame 7.2

> Nothing is gained educationally by merely documenting interventions that don't work.

Figure 7.4 summarizes key aspects of each tier of RTI instructional support (Brown & Doolittle, 2008; Collier, 2010; Echevarria & Vogt, 2010; Fisher, Frey, & Rothenberg, 2011).

Figure 7.4

Key Aspects of RTI Tiers of Instruction

Tier I (All Students)

- Research-based curriculum and methods with evidence of effectiveness for the target population(s)
- English Language Development (ELD)/English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) is a component of core instruction
- Culturally responsive instruction to access, assess, and build on background knowledge
- Strategies and materials appropriate for English learners
    - Sheltered, academically rich, English language instruction
    - Peer collaboration
    - Native language instruction
    - Visuals, realia
- Teaching for transfer
- Universal screening of academics
- Progress monitoring compares English learners with English learning peers
- Informed interpretation of student performance
- Explicit instruction in—and contextualized opportunities to use—phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension

Tier II (Some Students)

- 20–30 minutes in addition to core program
- Data-driven (multiple sources)
- Evidence-based curriculum and methods (e.g., sheltered English language instruction,

native language instruction)

- Culturally responsive instruction to access, assess, and build on background knowledge
- Small group (three to five students)
- Systematic and explicit instruction that targets skill building, transfer, and authentic use
- Progress monitored with comparisons made to true peers; results/interpretation triangulated across settings

Tier III (Few Students)

- Appropriateness of Tier I and II evident by progress of most true peers
- 45–60 minutes in addition to core program
- Delivered by educators who can pinpoint specific needs of individual students and respond in culturally responsive ways
- Data driven (multiple sources and types)
- Culturally responsive instruction to access, assess, and build on background knowledge
- Strategies and materials appropriate for English learners (e.g., sheltered English language instruction, peer collaboration, native language instruction, visuals, realia)
- Culturally and linguistically appropriate assessments inform interpretation of need
- Special education support, as necessary, and as supported by detailed description of, and plan for, conditions under which student skills *grow*.

Problem Solving Versus Referral for SPED

Jaime is currently in the 7th grade. He came to the United States and entered school in the middle of last year. Teachers have become concerned that, despite occasional translation support from a Spanish-speaking paraprofessional, he is still nowhere near grade level. Jaime is not even able to work successfully with his peers on 3rd- and 4th-grade-level material used in tiered reading and ESL.

The reading teacher has expressed the concern that Jaime should be in special education, but the ESL teacher, Mrs. Jaeger, thinks that he is “bright.” She has observed him during his unstructured time with other Spanish-speaking students and has noticed that Jaime usually takes the lead in organizing games. He also appears quick with responses that make his friends laugh. Tension has developed between these teachers because of their different perspectives on Jaime’s inherent abilities. However, each agrees that Jaime is not able to work anywhere near grade level in either Spanish or English, so he is referred to SPED.

3

The school’s bilingual social worker accompanies Mrs. Jaeger to Jaime’s home to find out more about his family and school history. This is always an important component of the evaluation. Jaime’s mother reports they had lived in a rural part of Mexico where access to education was inconsistent and offered to all children simultaneously, regardless of educational level. When asked, his mother

simultaneously, regardless of educational level. When asked, his mother estimates that Jaime had been in school about a total of 10 or 12 months before coming to the United States. Her answers to additional questions and the perceptions she shares of her child indicate that she does not see him as very different from other children his age that she had known in Mexico.

4

This information helps the evaluation team understand Jaime's case. It explains many of the perceived problems, even his difficulties with learning material in Spanish. They now know much of the prior instruction provided had not been at Jaime's learning level, regardless of language, so his lack of achievement is not conclusive evidence of an innate learning problem.

An informal probe of Spanish literacy skills reveals that Jaime does have the critical foundations of literacy in his primary language. These and other assessments indicate that Jaime is able to read and comprehend in Spanish at the early 2nd-grade level. Although consistent with his educational history, Jaime's skills are not enough for him to have benefitted from the higher-level translated texts and supports used with other newcomers. Had teachers known this information sooner, they would have better understood his inability to perform academic tasks, despite what were initially considered adequate supports.

A student interview also reveals Jaime has developed functional literacy from environmental print and is proud of his ability to write words such as ***Walmart, Wendy's, open,*** and ***closed*** without a visual model. Using an early elementary

probe of English reading, teachers also discover Jaime is beginning to transfer Spanish literacy skills to his new language by phonetically spelling *naf* (*knife*), *forc* (*fork*), and *spun* (*spoon*). Given this more detailed description of Jaime's skills, which includes statements about what he has mastered and can demonstrate, the team is able to develop much more appropriate interventions to better promote his learning and language acquisition.

Occasionally, a student—such as Jaime in this scenario—will stand out as having atypical difficulty with classroom material. Responsive teachers modify their lessons and the manner of delivery to find "keys" for opening different learning doors. Many also benefit from consultation with others. Effective teacher assistance or problem-solving teams have members with insights and expertise in pertinent areas such as English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), special education, behavior, and literacy. Family members and students themselves also provide invaluable information and insight. Without these perspectives, the ideas and recommendations provided may reflect common approaches for most students but may not be appropriately tailored to the specific needs of *this* CLD student.

In Jaime's case, what barriers or presumptions delayed attention to his needs? Would Jaime have stood out during a subject- or grade-level problem-solving process? Had the staff members participated in more individualized problem-solving discussions prior to referral for SPED (see **Figure 7.5**), the following proactive measures might have been taken:

- Data from Jaime's educational history would have prompted academic probes and revealed the inappropriateness of standard newcomer materials for him.
- Information about Jaime's skills and interests would have informed the development of relevant, engaging tasks that were at his learning level (e.g., Wendy's menu language and mathematics).
- Bilingual paraprofessional support might have been used to bridge Jaime's prior knowledge and new concepts.
- Jaime's Spanish proficiency would have enabled him to participate orally in higher-level content discussions with heterogeneous cooperative groups that included at least one

other bilingual student.

- Formative assessment to monitor Jaime's participation in, and success with, modified and accommodated instruction would have more accurately revealed his true learning capacities.

Figure 7.5

Informed Problem-Solving Discussions

- Use methods such as those described in Chapter 3 (e.g., records review, interview, observation) to gather preinstructional assessment information in the following areas:
    - Educational history (e.g., type, language, and consistency of instruction)
    - Primary language proficiency (e.g., developmental milestones, language use patterns within the home, current use/proficiency levels, evidence of L1 loss)
    - English proficiency (e.g., amount/type of prior exposure, current use/proficiency levels, academic performance in language-laden settings)
    - Acculturation (e.g., time in country, cultural learning norms) (refer to Chapter 4)
    - Medical history (e.g., vision, hearing, chronic mental or physical illness)
- Develop a profile of student skills based on information and evidence obtained through preinstructional assessment.
- Accommodate the delivery of instruction (e.g., first language support, sheltered English, modified instructional level) to *maximize the student's ability to participate and engage* in the curriculum.
- Monitor the student's response to comprehensible instruction provided:
    - At appropriate learning levels (regardless of age/grade)
    - With attention to differences in learning processes
    - Under individual and collaborative conditions

- Employ varied means to assess student learning in context. Identify the conditions in which the student *does* learn. Seek evidence of applied skills and learning in other contexts. Use this information to continually inform and adapt instruction so the student can experience both success and challenge with the curriculum.

- Continue effective interventions that can be supported within the accommodated tiers.

- Keep refining, adjusting, and documenting the types and intensities of supports needed in other areas until the student experiences success.

- If the amount of support exceeds what can be assured via a responsive general education program, that data is needed to help determine eligibility and need for special education.

5

Use of RTI to support referral for special education hinges on the preinstructional and formative assessments that add critical information to presumptions of experience and static measures of universal "growth." A student like Jaime who has received limited education in his native country may be very unlikely to experience classroom success even when instructed using lower grade-level content and when provided native language support. Without an awareness of a CLD student's experiential, educational, and language acquisition history, a teacher might easily compare this student with cultural and linguistic peers who are performing well under the same conditions and mistakenly suspect the presence of a learning disability. Thus, it is extremely important to examine all aspects of a student's past and present language, learning, and social experiences for their ability to explain or nullify current assumptions about learning and language acquisition abilities.

6

Although previously discussed in Chapter 3 as best practice for all CLD students, *preassessment* is also a term that can be used in special education to denote the process of gathering the specific information needed to decide whether special education considerations, including evaluation, are warranted. Whereas general education preassessment strives to gather information to inform *forthcoming* instruction, special education preassessment, or prereferral, looks at similar data for its ability to shed light on *current* learning or behavioral concerns.

In the authors' view, a robust problem-solving process provides all the information and insight of typical preassessment processes, but in a more timely manner and without the presumption of disability. The goal of special education prereferral is to determine what the student knows and can do and whether knowledge and performance are consistent with what one would expect based on that student's educational and experiential history. A problem-solving process tends to go farther in helping a team determine the methods and/or adaptations that enhance success in either a

general education or special education setting. Thus, we move away from the dichotomous "place" or "nonplace" decision and toward a deeper understanding of what truly helps the student learn. Discussion of assessment related to students determined to have special educational needs is further addressed in Chapter 8.

Assessment Freeze Frame 7.3

> Without an awareness of a CLD student's experiential, educational, and language acquisition history, a teacher might easily compare the student with cultural and linguistic peers who are performing well under the same conditions and mistakenly suspect the presence of a learning disability.